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THE RABBINATE OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE,
LONDON, FROM 1756-1842.

BY DR. C. DUSCHINSKY, London.

II.

Rabbi David Tevele Schiff.

R. ZEVI HIRSCHEL LEWIN left London for Halberstadt in the spring of 1764, and the London community was not long in finding a successor, for in 1765 we see R. Tevele Schiff already installed as Rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Duke's Place. Chiefly instrumental in bringing off his election was Aaron Goldsmith (Goldschmidt), the founder of the well-known Anglo-Jewish family, to whom his uncle, a certain R. Joḥanan, had recommended the Rabbi. He is styled by Rabbi Tevele as cousin in a letter which he wrote to his brother R. Meir on Adar 21, 1776 (App. V, Letter I). A certain Rabbi Meir Hanover was likewise one of those who helped his cause by writing to friends in London.⁶⁰ We only know of one competitor, who tried hard to succeed R. Hirschel, and that was his cousin R. Meshullam Zalman, son of Rabbi Jacob Emden of Altona, who ultimately was chosen as Rabbi of the Hambro Synagogue, and came to London likewise in the year 1765. R. Jacob Emden in his Autobiography gives us some interesting details with reference to this election.⁶¹ He says: 'In the month of Nisan of the same year (1765) my son Rabbi Meshullam Zalman

⁶⁰ See letter I in Appendix V.

⁶¹ מְגִילַת סֵפֶר, ed. Kahana (Warsaw, 1896), p. 209 ff.

was elected as Rabbi (אב בית דין) of the Hamburger congregation in London, likewise a result of my activity and endeavours for some time past, and after I nearly gave up every hope for it. For he had many opponents on the part of the Synagogue in Duke's Place, which separated from the community (!) and elected another Rabbi, R. Tevele Schiff from Frankfort-on-the-Main. It was, however, from God, and so all the plotting and obstacles, the opposition placed in my son's way, could not frustrate his election. Even after he had duly been elected they conspired against him, and people wrote me letters threatening that, if he came to London, they would attack and abuse him. All this was done at the instigation of that man "Laze" (לזע), a pupil of "that man" who made special efforts and wrote me letters, full of perversions and untruths, with the intention of frightening me so that I should prevent my son from accepting the position. The congregation of the Hamburg Shool (Synagogue), however, was anxious to have him, and they had warned me beforehand to take no notice of that shameful letter. He visited us here, and remained during the past Shabuot festival, and all the most notable men of the three Kehillahs (Hamburg, Altona, and Wandsbeck) gave evidence of the respect they felt for him. He left us and entered upon his duties in London at the middle of Tammuz, and was welcomed with great honours and with joy. I have since heard that even his former enemies have now become his friends. May God grant that he rise higher and higher and be blessed with children.'⁶²

It appears from this note that the London community had originally intended to appoint one Rabbi only for both

⁶² Apparently Meshullam Zalman had no children.

Synagogues, in the same way as Rabbi Zevi Hirschel had filled both offices simultaneously. Jacob Emden had endeavoured to secure this position for his son, but the more important part of the community was opposed to him, and they elected R. Tevele Schiff for Duke's Place. Emden's party afterwards succeeded in appointing him as Rabbi of the Hambro-Shool. The man Laze, or Lazar, mentioned in Emden's note, was an adherent of the Baal-Shem Samuel Falk, a cabbalist and mystic, who lived in London for about forty years until his death in the year 1782, and Emden may refer to Falk when he says that Laze was a pupil of 'that man'.⁶³ We cannot tell whether Falk had a great following in the community, but at the end of his days we know that he was well disposed towards R. Tevele, as he bequeathed him an annuity of £10.⁶⁴ Also another member of the Beth Din, R. Abraham of Nancy, is benefited by the same Will to the extent of fifty guineas.⁶⁵ The man Laze is often mentioned in MS. Adler, No. 2241, which comprises the most interesting diary of Falk's factotum, 'Zevi Hirsch son of R. Isaac (Isik) the Levite Shtadlan of Kalisch', written in the years 1747-51. This Zevi b. Isaac styles the man 'Laze Levi of Hamburg' or הרוח לאזע (the windy Lazar), and it appears that this Laze was sent by Falk on secret missions to Germany and Holland, but was nevertheless very often in dire poverty,

⁶³ The reference may, however, also mean Eybeschütz, whom Emden often calls אֵיזשענשטעט.

⁶⁴ The Will says: 'To the High Priest of the Great Synagogue for the time being, whoever he may be, Ten Pounds Ten Shillings annually . . .'; see *J. Hist. Soc. Engl. Transact.*, VIII, Misc., p. xlviii.

⁶⁵ 'To Mr. Abraham the son of Solomon, usually called Abraham Nancy.' He signs, however: 'Abraham Hamburger of Nancy' in the document of testimony dated 5 Elul 1783 and 26 Elul same year. See Appendix V.

although he had a well-to-do relative in London called Selig of Hamburg. Whole pages of the MS. are devoted to the debts which Laze made by borrowing from Falk's servant various smaller sums. It is not unlikely that Laze opposed the election of the son of R. Jacob Emden, who was known to be a bitter opponent of every cabbalist and mystic. Lazar Hamburger's daughter, Sarah, married Benjamin Wolf Franklin of Breslau, the ancestor of the Franklin family, in London on August 28, 1765. Mr. Arthur Franklin in his 'Records of the Franklin family' (London, 1915), p. 11, reproduces the tombstone inscription of Lazar Hamburger's father. According to Mr. Franklin (*ibid.*, p. 10) this 'Eleazar Leiza' was known as Lazarus Joseph. Although the Ḥalizah-letter to which he refers does not call him Leiza, but אליעזר לזר, i.e. 'Lezer', there seems little doubt that he was identical with the Laze mentioned in Emden's autobiography, who was the follower of the cabbalist Falk. The letter of Ḥalizah to which Mr. Franklin refers, and which he has shown me, is dated Breslau, 28th of Kislev, 5526 (1765), and is an undertaking by Asher Antshel and David Franklin, brothers of Benjamin Wolf Franklin, to give Ḥalizah to the latter's wife should he die without leaving issue. Neither of these brothers, however, signed the document, the signatories of which are Samuel ben Eliezer, scribe of the Breslau community, and Asher Lemel ben Isaac, the beadle of that congregation. They address the document to 'The great Rabbi, who was formerly in Podhaice and is now Rabbi in London', namely, Rabbi Meshullam Zalman Emden. As time went on, the opponents of Emden's son seemed to have increased in number, contrary to what Emden writes in his diary, and Meshullam Zalman was ultimately compelled to leave

London. We learn this from a letter of R. Tevele to his brother, dated 1st Ijjar, 1780,⁶⁶ in which he writes that R. Meshullam had implored his congregation to let him remain in London, but they insisted upon his leaving the country, and agreed to give him an annuity of £50, and so 'he is leaving during this week'. He appears to have gone to Stary-Constantinow in Russia.⁶⁷

Rabbi Tevele, on the other hand, was apparently well-liked in his community. He was descended from a family

⁶⁶ See Appendix V, Letter 4.

⁶⁷ Opinion of Prof. G. Deutsch. Cf. also my *Jacob Kimchi and Shalom Buzaglo*, p. 20 (London, 1914). There is an 'Order of Service' extant, in the possession of Mr. E. N. Adler, for 'The Fast-Day held by Command of the King on the 13th of December 1776', in which R. Meshullam Zalman is mentioned as author of the Hebrew Prayer said on that occasion. The title pages read as follows:

Page 1 a

סדר תפלה ליום תענית שצוה אדונינו המלך ירום הורו ביום ששי
בשבת ג' ימים לחדש טבת שנת התקל"ז ליצירה בבית הכנסת של ק"ק
אשכנזים יע"א בלונדון, בבית ובדפוס אלכסנדר בר יהודה ליב זצ"ל.

Page 2 a

'A Form of Prayer composed by the Reverend and Most learned Rabby Israel Meshulam Solomon D.D. Rabby of the Jews Synagogue in Magpy-Alley Fen-Church Street and of the New Synagogue in Leadenhall Street. To be used on Friday the 13th day of December 1776. For success of His Majesty's Arms according to His Majesty's Proclamation. Faithfully translated by Alex. Alexander, Printer, and sold by the Translator No. 78 White Chapel High Street.'

The booklet consists of sixteen pages in 8vo. The sermon preached on that occasion was likewise printed by A. Alexander and consists of twelve paragraphs which fill twenty-seven octavo pages. The title reads: A | Sermon | Preached | On Friday the 13th of December 1776 | by the Reverend Israel Meshulam Solomon | Rabby of the Jews Synagogues in Church Row | Fen-Church Street and Leadenhall Street | Being | a Moral Discourse | Suited to the Solemn Occasion of the Day | Appointed by Royal Proclamation | For | a General Fast | To pray for the Success of His Majesty's Arms. | A Free translation from the Hebrew | . Printed by A. Alexander &c. (as on the Order of Service). E. N. Adler possesses a copy of this sermon (cp. Wolf-Jacobs: *Bibl. Angl. Jud.*, p. 190).

of Rabbinical scholars. The famous Rabbi Meir Schiff of Fulda, author of *חידושי מה"רם ש"ף*, who died in 1641 at the age of thirty-six, was also a member of this family.⁶⁸ According to Dietz there were two branches of this family in Frankfort, the one descended from the head of the Frankfort Yeshibah, Jacob b. Beifus Cohn zum Wedel (died 1655). This branch became extinct in 1714. R. Tevele was a descendant of Jacob Cohn's brother Isaac, who lived in the house called 'zum Schiff' (thence the family name Schiff), and died in the year 1656.⁶⁹ His grandson, Moses Meyer Schiff, was a wealthy man, and lived in the house called 'zum grünen Schild', which remained the property of the family until the death of his grandson, Solomon Schiff, R. Tevele Schiff's father, in 1777 (22 Adar II).⁷⁰ The well-known philanthropist, Jacob H. Schiff of New York, is a descendant of another son of this Moses Meyer, namely of Joseph Moses, called Josbel Mayer Schiff, likewise of the house 'zum grünen Schild'. After the death of Solomon Schiff, his sons R. Tevele, then already Rabbi in London, and R. Meir Dayyan in Frankfort, sold their interest to Meir Rothschild, the ancestor of the Rothschild family. The minute-book of the Frankfort Beth-Din records a dispute between the vendor R. Meir Schiff and the purchaser, the former insisting upon payment of the balance of the purchase money in gold coin, while Meir Rothschild insisted that he need only pay in 'minz'

⁶⁸ See Loewenstein, *Gesch. d. Jud. i. d. Kurpfalz*, p. 153; Dietz, *Stammbuch d. Frankf. Juden* (1907), p. 258; Horowitz, *Frankf. Rabb.* (= *FR.*), vol. III, pp. 38-40, and *Frankfurter Grabinschriften* (= *FG.*).

⁶⁹ His son Bendit died 4th Tammuz 1660. Hor., *FG.*, No. 864.

⁷⁰ Hor., *ibid.*, No. 3572, where he is styled *ה"רש"י* = the venerable. Dietz states as his birth date 1730, which cannot be correct, as in 1777 his son R. Tevele was already more than forty-seven years old (see later).

money, which was less than the gold currency. There was also a dispute between the parties with reference to the ground rent (called 'Grundzins'), which R. Meir Schiff contended was not to be allowed to the purchaser until it actually became due, while the purchaser required allowance for it at once. The minutes mention that half of the house had been the property of the London Rabbi Tevele Schiff. The house 'Grünes Schild' was already in existence in the year 1608, as mentioned by Schudt (*Jüd. Merkwürdigkeiten*, III, p. 147), and it is also in his list of houses of the Frankfort Judengasse of the year 1611 (*ibid.*, pp. 153 and 154).⁷¹

R. Tevele's mother was Roesche, daughter of Abele London. R. Meir Schiff, in the preface to his work דבר אביו, referring to this grandfather, says that his brother had come back to the place of origin of their mother. R. Tevele was a devoted son, and even in his old age he mentions his parents with reverence and gratitude. In a letter to his brother written in the year 1776, when his father was apparently already old and feeble and unable to read, he expresses his doubt whether his brother should communicate the contents of the letter to the father, lest he should be disappointed, in case the election of his brother Meir to the Rabbinate of Copenhagen, referred to in the letter, would not be realized. Writing about the anniversary of his mother's death (called *Jahrzeit*) in 1787, he says: 'He could not answer his brother's letter of Sivan 1st earlier than the 26th (date of the letter) as their mother's *Jahrzeit* intervened, which he spent studying all night and fasting

⁷¹ 'Hiertz zum Gruenen Schild als der Zeit Baumeister' (p. 154); see also Appendix VII.

all day for the benefit of her soul, as it was to her that he has to be thankful for the tender care, and "the wine and oil she bathed him in during his childhood"⁷² which enabled him to fast in his old age.' In another letter of the 21st Adar, 1782, he writes that he post-dates the letter to the 22nd, because that day was the *Jahrzeit* of his father, and he could not write then on account of the fast he observed on that day. His father was, in keeping with the tradition of the family, a learned man who trained his children in the traditional way, his chief object being to make his sons בני תורה, religious Jews learned in the Law. We know little of R. Tevele's early days, except that, as a young man, he was a pupil of Jacob Poper, Rabbi in Frankfort, the celebrated author of the Responsa שב יעקב,⁷³ and of his successor, R. Jacob Joshua Falk,⁷⁴ of Lemberg, author of the work פני יהושע—one of the classical works in Talmudic exposition—who was also famous as a great adversary of R. Jonathan Eybeschütz.

R. Tevele married Breinle, daughter of Isaac Sinzheim of Frankfort a. M., and thus became connected with another famous and respected Jewish family. His father-in-law was a brother of Abraham Sinzheim, the famous Shtadlan of Vienna, and of Judah Ephraim Leb Sinzheim, founder of the Beth-Hamidrash in Worms; while another brother, Solomon Sinzheim, played likewise an important rôle in the life of the Jewish community of Vienna.⁷⁵ Solomon

⁷² Referring to the saying of R. Ḥanina, 'the warm water (baths) and the oil with which my mother treated me in my youth they gave me strength in my old age', see *Hullin* 24 b, where it is stated that R. Ḥanina when eighty years old could stand on one leg while he slipped off his shoe and put it on again. A. Röschen Schiff died 29 Kislev 5503. Cp. *FG*, 2479.

⁷³ Frankfurt a. M. 1702.

⁷⁴ Died 1756. See about Popers and Falk, Hor., *FR.*, vols. II and III.

⁷⁵ About Solomon S. see Baumgarten-Kaufmann, מנחת סדרים, Intro-

Sinzheim's daughters were (1) Mate, wife of R. Tevele's brother, R. Meir Schiff, and (2) Mindel, wife of his son Moses, who in this way was a brother-in-law of his uncle R. Meir. The letters printed in the appendix furnish convincing proofs as to the correctness of these data, and dispose of the statement made by Dr. H. Adler in his essay, 'The Chief Rabbis of England' (*Jew. Hist. Exhib. Papers*, p. 285), and accepted by Mr. Israel Solomon (*Transactions J. Hist. Soc. Engl.*, VII, p. 241), that R. Tevele married Ber Adler's sister (true is only that R. Ber Adler's wife was R. Tevele's sister). The Hazkarah-Book of Worms⁷⁶ contains in praising terms a lengthy record of the death of Breinle, wife of R. Tevele Schiff.

Soon after his marriage R. Tevele became head of the Beth-ha-Midrash in Worms, of which his wife's uncle, Leb Sinzheim, was the founder. Horowitz (*FR.*, vol. III, p. 18) was not aware of the fact that R. Tevele lived for some time also in Vienna. This is evident from MS. Adler, No. 1160. This MS. contains on 147 quarto leaves notes of Halaka and Haggadic lectures by R. Tevele Schiff,

duction, p. 5. The genealogy of the family is given by Loewenstein, *Kurpfalz*, p. 215, and *ibid.*, Anhang, 13a. Loewenstein does not mention Solomon Sinzheim except the grandfather of the same name, while Baumgarten did not know of Sol. S.'s two daughters. Mate Schiff died 21st Kislev 1817. See *FG.*, No. 4899. Cp. also L. A. Frankel, *Inscriften*, Nos. 429 and 689.

⁷⁶ See קובץ על יד, vol. III, 1887, p. 49: האשה חשובה הצנועה הרבנית: מרת בריינלה בת כ"ה אייזק זינצהיים ז"ל בעבור שהיתה אשה כשירה צנוע[ה] והגונה, וברצון בעלה כפה פרשה לעניי' בכל עת ועונת, ותפלתה הי' בכוונה, פרקה נאה ויראת ה' מנעורי' והני נשי דאיתנהו בשמירה איתנהו בזכירה, זכרה לה אלקי' ותאיר נרה ולהיות נפשה בצרור החיים צדורה ונתן בעלה לצדקה בעבורה, עשרה זהו" [נפטרת בק"ק לונדן מש"ק ונקברת למחרתו יו" א" ער"ח שבט תקל"ב ל" ונקראת בפי כל אדם בריינלה אשת הרב מהו"ר טעבלי שיף הנא"ב דק"ק לונדן].

pupils, the most famous one, was the great cabbalist Rabbi Nathan Adler (a near relative of the late Chief Rabbi of London, Dr. Nathan Marcus Adler), who for a short time, in 1782, was Rabbi of Boskowitz in Moravia, and is known as the author of a commentary on the Mishnah, entitled *משנת ר' נתן* (ed. Dr. B. H. Auerbach, Frankfurt, Kaufmann). Horowitz has proved that many of the notes in this work are identical with the explanations on the Mishnah which R. Tevele Schiff gave in his work *לשון זהב*, and he suggests that the real author of these explanations was R. Tevele.⁷⁹

In February, 1765, Rabbi David Tevele Schiff was elected Rabbi of Duke's Place Synagogue, in the same year as Haham Mose Hacoheh D'Azevedo became Rabbi of the Sephardi congregation and R. Meshullam Zalman Emden of the Hambro Synagogue, each one using the title Ab-beth-Din. We have heard that R. Meshullam Zalman had been desirous to obtain the post of Rabbi for both congregations, and probably to emphasize his independence he styled himself 'Chief Rabbi of London and the Provinces' in the approbation of Buzaglo's *בסא מלך*,⁸⁰ in the same way as R. Tevele always signs, even in the letters which he sent to his brother (see Appendix), 'Rabbi of London and the Provinces'. R. Tevele soon won friends in London, and he enjoyed general respect from his own congregants as well as from people outside his congregation. He seemed to have lived in peace with his colleagues, no quarrels or disputes are recorded, not even between Emden and him. His reputation was so great, that when Buzaglo attacked

⁷⁹ See Horowitz, *FR.*, IV, p. 39 ff.

⁸⁰ My conjecture in 'Jacob Kimchi and Shalom Buzaglo' (*J. Hist. S. Tr.*, VII, p. 272, also London, Luzac & Co., 1914) has to be modified accordingly.

Emden in a most aggressive and offensive manner,⁸¹ the latter applies to R. Tevele for a testimonial, while Buzaglo gave him the title *הכהן הגדול* = 'the High Priest'.

R. Tevele's name soon became well known in the Jewish world. The London Jews had business connexions on the Continent and overseas, and frequently questions and inquiries reached him from relations of London Jews in those parts, especially religious questions relating to marriages and divorce cases. He in turn had occasion to address letters of a similar kind to Rabbis residing on the Continent. Thus we have a letter he wrote to R. Joseph Steinhart of Fürth, inquiring whether the letter of divorce produced by the woman Frumet, daughter of Leb, wife of Lebele Roedelsheim, dated five years previously, was a valid document, and he asks him for confirmation of the same. This letter (App. V, Letter XIII) also contains a request to the same Rabbi to intervene in the case of a certain Gedaliah b. Leb of Mainneck, near Burgkundstadt in Bavaria, now living in London. His wife refuses to follow him to this country, and R. Tevele asks the Rabbi of Fürth to persuade her to accept a letter of divorce which the man intends sending to her through a messenger (*שליח*). Interesting is the story of another woman, the wife of Nathan Harris of London, recorded in a document of testimony (*גביית עדות*, App. V, XXI), taken up by the Beth Din of London under the presidency of R. Tevele in the year 1783. The husband had left England on board a warship for Jamaica, and died some time afterwards on board another ship, anchored at Port Antonio, on his return journey to England, and was buried in the latter place. As witness figures a certain Solomon

⁸¹ Cp. my edition of Buzaglo's *"מעשה ה"*, &c., in *Hazofeh*, vol. IV, 1914.

b. Isaac the Levite, who lived in Detroit opposite the house of Admiral Route (or Rowthe?),⁸² whose steward brought him the news of Harris's death. There being also other evidence in the form of a letter written by Abraham Simson of Jamaica to his mother living in London, in which the circumstances of Harris's death were related in agreement with the witness's statement, the Beth Din accepted the evidence, and permitted the woman to re-marry. Another letter relating to a divorce case sent to Rabbi Saul of Amsterdam is likewise printed in the Appendix (No. V, Letter XIV), though not only questions of practical religious nature formed the subjects of our Rabbi's correspondence. Among the nineteen letters preserved in MS. Adler, No. 4095, are several dealing with theoretical expositions of Talmudic dicta. Most noteworthy of these are two letters by Rabbi Isaiah Pick, generally known as R. Isaiah Berlin, one of the first critics of the Talmud in the eighteenth century. He wrote fourteen important works, among which the most noteworthy are: Notes on the Aruch הפלאה שבערבין⁸³; Novellae to the Talmud חידושי הש"ם, now to be found in nearly every later edition of the Babylonian Talmud, and his commentary on the Sheeltot entitled שאילת שלום.⁸⁴ Prof. A. Berliner, in his biographical sketch (*Rabbi Jesajah Berlin*, Berlin, 1879), compares him to the Gaon Elijah of Wilna, and says that while the latter excelled by his erudition and genial spirit, R. Isaiah was a storehouse in which all the treasures of Jewish tradition were to be found to an astonishing degree. His knowledge of nearly every word of the Talmud was amazing, and

⁸² He writes : רויטע, cp. App. V. No. 21.

⁸³ Vol. I, Breslau, 1830; vol. II, Wien, 1853.

⁸⁴ Dyhrenfurt, 1786.

Berliner regrets that most of R. Isaiah's responsa are lost. We are now in the happy position to give in the Appendix (V, Nos. 17 and 18) two responsa which R. Isaiah wrote to R. Tevele Schiff in the years 1785 and 1787, containing important notes to various passages of the Talmud. He addresses R. Tevele as ש"ב 'relative', on account of R. Isaiah's father, R. Loeb Moḥiah Eisenstadt, having been a descendant of the famous R. Meir Schiff of Fulda, known as the 'Maharam Schiff'.⁸⁵ In one of the letters R. Isaiah refers to his recently edited commentary on the Sheeltoth, and says that he had sent two copies of this work through the good offices of R. Bendit b. Leḥ Ḥalfan of Amsterdam, one for R. Tevele and the other for R. Leḥ Pressburg, Aaron Goldschmidt's son-in-law. Responsa to R. Isaiah are to be found in the work *Leshon Zahab* of R. Tevele Schiff, vol. II, pp. 10a and 30a. Other famous Rabbis with whom our Rabbi had correspondence were R. Ezekiel Landau of Prague and his friend R. Nathan Mass Rosh beth-Din in Frankfort, to whom he sends a detailed description of the consecration of the Great Synagogue in 1766,⁸⁶ and with whom he corresponded in the

⁸⁵ See Horowitz, *FR*, vol. II, pp. 35-40; Berliner, *ibid.*, p. 7; cp. also Weiss, *אבני בית היוצר*, p. 32, and Loewenstein, *Kurpfalz*, p. 241. R. Isaiah was born in Eisenstadt, Hungary, in the year 1719, and died as Rabbi of Breslau on the 13th of May 1799. Cp. *Jew. Enc.*, III, p. 79, where the year of his birth is given as 1725; see also Brann in *Graetz-Jubelschrift*, p. 263, and I. Zunz *הצדק*, p. 163.

⁸⁶ The Order of Service to this Consecration is not in the British Museum, but Mr. E. N. Adler is the fortunate owner of the one copy of which I know. The title pages read:

Page 1 a

שיר חנוכת הבית דבית הכנסת הגדולה שנבנה מחדש פה קהלתינו
קהל קדוש אשכנזים השם ישמרם ונתחנך ונתקדש ביום הששי כ"ד אלול
שנת יתרועעו אף ישירן לפ"ק.

most friendly manner for many years.^{86a} Letters from and to R. Saul, Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam, brother of R. Zevi Hirschel Lewin, and others from R. Nunis Vais of Livorno have also been saved, the latter being published in R. Tevele's work *Leshon Zahab* (p. 29 b). The Rabbi of Livorno had asked for his advice in the case of a marriage and subsequent divorce of a Cohanite and a black woman from India.

Most of R. Tevele's letters which I found in MS. Adler 4095 are, however, of a private character and addressed to his brother R. Meir. They are of special interest owing to the vivid and homely style, the unrestrained manner in which the brother answers the requests or questions of the other, rebukes are intermixed with expressions of sincere attachment, and we see the true brotherly love which united the Rabbi of London with the Dayyan of Frankfort, who was also bound to him by other ties, to which circumstance we have already referred. When reading these letters we can well imagine the complacent life our Rabbi led in London, but we are also enabled to see some phases of Jewish life in general, how the Jew lived, his small and great troubles as member of his Kehillah or as

נרפוס (!) פה ק"ק לונדון לכבוד הבורא ולכבוד המלכות בהסכמת אדוננו מורנו ורבינו הגאון הגדול נ"י פ"ה ע"ה כבוד מו"ה ד"ד טעבלי נר"ו אב"ר דק"ק הנ"ל והמדינה זבפקודת האלופים קצינים פרנסים גבאי צדקה דקהלתינו יצ"ו והובא על מזבח הדפוס (!) ע"י כמר נחום ריישר.

Page 1 b

This Prayer used at the Opening of the Great Synagogue in Duke's Place 29th August 1766 composed in Hebrew by Rabbi Nahum Joseph Polak and made English by J. N. Inscribed to the Most worthy Presidents Naphtali Franks Esq., Mr Naphtali Hart Myers Gent. and Mr. Joel Levi Gent. Stewart. Performed by Mr. Isaac Elias Polak Principal Reader and his Assistants. (Eight pages in 8vo.)

^{86a} See Horowitz, *FR.*, IV, p. 19, and *לשון זהב*, vol. I, pp. 6 and 26; see also Appendix V.

merchant, and as Shtadlan who has to use his influence for כלל ישראל, the general Jewish community. Private letters of this kind are very rarely accessible to the public, although, as a rule, they are just the most important and most true sources of history.

R. Tevele shows himself in especially favourable light in a letter referring to the sentence of death of a young Jew who had gone wrong by getting into bad company. The boy's associates were waylayers, who, having been caught redhanded, were condemned to death in accordance with the law of those days. R. Tevele having persuaded himself that the Jewish youth had not committed any capital sin for which he would have deserved the death penalty, moved heaven and earth to obtain pardon for him, and, although the letter in which this affair is described does not report the final result of the Rabbi's endeavours, it permits the conclusion that the Jew was pardoned on condition that he should leave the country and return to relatives in Germany who would take proper care of him—for such was the undertaking the petitioners gave. The letter is addressed to his relative Isaac Michael Speyer, banker in Langenschwalbach near Frankfort (see address to Letter XI). Speyer's permanent residence was in Frankfort, where he occupied a respected position in the Jewish community. When on the occasion of the Emperor Leopold's coronation a deputation of representative Jews waited on him, Speyer was the leader who spoke the address of homage on Oct. 1, 1790,⁸⁷ and two years later,

⁸⁷ See Horowitz, *FR.*, IV, p. 68. Isaac Speyer's death is recorded in *Memorbook Offenbach*, MS. Adler, No. 950 (formerly in possession of the late Mr. S. Schloss of London, who acquired it from Dr. Carmoly's library), p. 92 a. Speyer died in Offenbach, where he spent the last years of his life,

when Franz II was crowned as Emperor of Germany, Speyer was again chosen as speaker of the Jewish deputa-
on Friday, 3 Kislev 5568 (1807); his wife Fradle, daughter of Gedalyah Rofe, died on Sabbath 13 Ab. 1811. The following is the text of the memorials of Isaac Speyer and of his wife (the latter on p. 93 of the manuscript):

יזכור אלהים

את נשמת הקצין המפורסם התורני כ"ה יצחק איצק בן הקצין המפורסם התורני כ"ה מיכל שפיאאר זצ"ל מק"ק פראנקפורט דמיין יצ"ו. עבור שהלך כל ימיו בדרך ישרה, נו"נ באמונה ועשה תפלתו בכוונה לאל השוכן מעונה. שמעו הולך בכל מדינה. שהי' מפרנס עניי' בכל עת ועונה. ואשר הגדיל לעשות בהיותו פ"ומ וג"ץ בק"ק פפ"ד מי יכול לרננה. ראש לכל הקרואים היה לכל דבר מצוה ולצדקה ולג"ח. זאת ועוד אחרת שהוסיף נופח משלו לחזק ולקיים הדברים הטובים שהניח אביו זצ"ל להפיק רצון העניים בע"ץ ובקמח היו ידיו אמונה. טובו וחסדו הופיע ג"כ על יושבי קהלתנו פה ק"ק אופיבך יצ"ו שהיה מקום דירתו סוף ימי חייו. אשר הוקם^א והתקין בתוך ביתו מקום נאה לב"ה"ב ולבה"מ ללומדי תורה. חבר הי' ליראי ה" להחזיק יושבי ב"ה"מ דקלויז דפה: דבר טוב גדול וחזק מאד עשה ג"כ לבני חבורתנו קדישא דת"ת ללמד וללמד לקטנים. ולהלביש שלושה ילדי מתלמידי ת"ת בכל שנה ושנה. בזכות זה ובזכות שנתנו יורשיו מתנה לצדקה לכבוד נשמתו הטהורה. מלבד שארי תקונים וצדקות שעשה^ב בעבורו תנצ"ב'ה ע"נ אי"ו שררו וע"י שאר צו"צ שבגן עדן העליון אמן:

ויצא יצחק לש"וח בשדה לפנות ערב שבת קודש ג" בסליו תקסח לפ"ק פה ק"ק אופיבאך יצ"ו:
ונקרא בפי כל אדם כ"ה איצק שפיאאר מפ"פ דמיין.

דף 93 ע"א.

יזכור אלהים

את נשמת האשה חשובה הגבירה המפורסמת מרת פראדלה בת הקצין המנוח כה"ר גדליה רופא זצ"ל אלמנת הקצין הגביר המפורסם כה"ר איצק שפיאאר זצ"ל. עבור שהיתה אשה יראת ה' היא תתהלל כל ימיה היתה תמימה בדרכיה וצדקת במעשיה כבודה בת מלך פנימה

^א צ"ל: הקים

^ב צ"ל: שעשו

tion. He had great influence in official circles, and exercised it with great success on various occasions in the interest of his fellow Jews in and outside Germany. The principal Shtadlan in London was R. Leb Pressburg, son-in-law of

עקרת הבית והי' תמיד עיניה פקוחות על כל עסקי וצרכי ביתה שנעשה הכל בכשרות וביראת ה' ולא נתנה עיני' בשום תענוגי העו"ה רק תמיד צופיה הליכות ביתה להשגיח ביתר עוז על כל ענייני ביתה כפה פרשה לעני וידיה שלחה לאביוני' ובפרט ללומדי תורה. עבדה את ה' בירא' בעבודה שבלב זו תפלה ואף שהיתה אשה גדולה ועשירה. בכל זאת היה לה לב נשבר ונדכה להתפלל בתחנונים להשוכן את דכא. גם נתייסרה כמה שנים בחלאי' רעים וביסורי' קשים ומרים וקבלה אותן מאהבה ולמזבח כפרה ומסרה נפשה לקונה. גם הלכה בדרך טובים של אביה ושל בעלה הצדיקים המנוחים וצ"ל וצוותה לחלק מממונה סך מסוים בין עניי' רפה ובין עניי' דק"ק פ"פר" ועוד יתר דברים טובים ומצודקים לתועלת נשמתה. בשכר זה ובשכר שנתנו יורשיה עבורה סך מסוים לג"ץ תעלה נשמתה מעלה מעלה וצדק לפניו יהלך וכבוד ה' יאספה ותנצבה ע"נ א"י שררן ו"ענ שארי צו"ץ שב"ג"ע אמן.

נפטרת בשם טוב ביום שבת קודש פ' ואתחנן בין מנחה למעריב ונקברת למחרת ביו"א הוא י"ג מנחם פה ק"ק אופיבך תקעא לפ"ק. נקראת בפי כל פראדלה אשת כ"הר"ר איצק שפיארא וצ"ל.

They had three sons and one daughter who was the wife of Isaac Speyer's brother Lazar Michael Speyer. (See letters of R. Tevele and his son Moses, who send greetings לאחיו וחתנו 'to your brother and son in law'.) Dietz relates that Speyer left a fortune of fl. 480,000 (about £40,000), while at that time the fortune of Meir Rothschild was only fl. 60,000 (*Stammbuch*, p. 290). Michael Speyer offered hospitality to Rabbi Hayim Joseph David Azulai, the famous cabbalist and bibliographer, when he was, in 1755, on his mission in Frankfurt (cp. Azulai's itinerary מעגל טוב: in one of the latest volumes of the Mekize Nirdamim Society, of which, so far, I have only seen the proof-sheets. The reference is under date Ab 27).

Eliezer, son of Michael Speyer, and Isaac Michael Speyer's, his brother's son-in-law, died as a young man on the 7th of Ijjar 5549 (1789); his death was attributed by Leb Wetzlar in his book מעשה תענועים (Frankfurt a. M., 1789), a work directed against Rabbi Nathan Adler, the cabbalist, and his adherents, to the threats of Moses Hoellesschau, one of Adler's followers, who had harassed Speyer with the description of terrible dreams which he purported to have had about him (cp. *Hebr. Bibliographie*, vol. IV, 1862, p. 78). The Memorbook of the Offenbach Community (M.S. Adler, No. 950, p. 48 a,

Aaron Goldschmidt,⁸⁸ a learned man, one of the leaders of the Jewish community. Leb Pressburg was known as Lyon de Simons, and was a son of R. Samuel Pressburg, banker in Vienna.^{88a} It was this R. Leb who, in the interest of the accused Jewish boy, travelled after the judge, then on a circuit in the country, and obtained from him permission to appeal to the king for mercy. It was in all probability he who came into touch with foreign ambassadors and noblemen, and obtained their signatures to the petition. Graf Kognek (or Konnek) and a certain Baron ז"צ(?), as well as the Russian ambassador, were among those who took interest in the matter, and signed the petition. Isaac Speyer gave the Rabbi permission to spend forty guineas on his account, but this, R. Tevele writes, will not be quite sufficient, and he asks for permission to draw more on Speyer's account. The Rabbi reveals in this letter (dated 15 Ab., 1785) a truly noble mind. He is in great anxiety lest he should not act

No. 480) mentions Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman, son of Rabbi Kalman Posen, 'who brought up the late Eliezer Speyer'. The entry reads as follows:

יזכור אלקים את נשמת הר"ר קלונימוס קלמן בן מהור"ר קלמן פחנא זצ"ל אשר גדל החסיד מהור"ר אלעזר בן כ"ה מיכל שפיידר זצ"ל מפפ"ר ולמד עמו עד יום מותו נפטר ונקבר בשיבה טובה יום
 ד" (cp. also Horowitz, *FG.*, No. 3993). We can thus understand why R. Nathan Maas, Rosh.-Beth-Din of Frankfurt, was a bitter opponent of R. Nathan Adler the Cabbalist (A. Geiger in *Hebr. Bibl.*, V, p. 77). Maas was a son-in-law of Michael Speyer, and thus brother-in-law of Eliezer Speyer, whose untimely death was attributed to a follower of Adler as mentioned above. His wife Jutle, daughter of Michael Speyer, died on the 6th of Tebet, 1754 (Horowitz, *FG.*, No. 2813, and *FR.*, vol. IV, p. 21). Sir Edgar Speyer is a descendant of this family.

⁸⁸ R. Tevele mentions his engagement to Goldschmidt's daughter in a letter to his brother R. Meir in 1781 (Letter V).

^{88a} Samuel Pressburg or, as he was called, Samuel Simon was an uncle of Simon de Geldern, great-uncle of Heinrich Heine. Cp. D. Kaufmann: *Ahnensaal*, pp. 36 ff. and H. Adler in *J. H. S. E. Trans.*, vol. V. p. 168.

promptly enough, and by hesitation become the cause of a man's death; sends word to the condemned man urging him to spend his time in fervent prayers to God that He may spare his life. His anxiety is so great that he has no rest in daytime and no sleep at night, and he writes to his brother, R. Meir, in a postscript which is added to the letter, 'would it have been a question of a Shidduch (marriage) where I could have earned a great sum in negotiating it, I would not have done it, even if it would only have meant writing so many and long letters as I had to do in this matter.'⁸⁹

Another letter written in the public interest is the one addressed to R. Herz of Edelsheim, whom R. Tevele gives the honouring title of שתדלן הרור, and refers to the legacy of the Baal-Shem Samuel Falk, which formed the basis of a law-suit, dealt with at length in *JHSE. Transactions* vol. VIII, Misc., by Mr. H. S. Q. Henriques. Cosman Lehman, an admirer of Falk, claims that the whole of the estate belongs to him, and as most of the money was invested in French government bonds Lehman sued for an injunction in Paris that the money should not be paid out to the legatees.⁹⁰ R. Tevele and the trustees of the legacy, one of whom was Aaron Goldsmith, wrote, on the advice of a certain R. Simon Boas of the Hague to Herz of Edelsheim requesting him to use his influence and obtain permission for the money to be paid over according to the

⁸⁹ Negotiations for marriages or, as it is termed, 'Shadkanut' was not an uncommon secondary occupation of the Rabbis in those days. R. Jacob Emden is proud of the fact that while Rabbi of Emden he never tried to make money in this way. See סגולת ספר, p. 112.

⁹⁰ Cosman Lehmann was son of Herz Lehmann of Vienna and nephew of the famous Hoffactor Behrend Lehmann of Hanover. Cp. Grunwald: *Sam. Oppenheimer*, p. 293, *Mitt. z. jüd. Volksk.* 1903, p. 157.

will. He was sure Herz would not refuse to do all he could, especially as many scholars and poor people were waiting for the money. If more convenient, R. Isaac Speyer could act as intermediary between them.

The Jews of London had not altered much since the days of his predecessor R. Hirschel, and the Rabbi's duties likewise had remained the same, consisting chiefly in giving decisions in Rabbinic law. The study of Torah had not been advanced, for R. Tevele complains in nearly the same words as R. Hirschel of having no pupils to teach and no friends with whom he could study Torah: 'I have no pupil and not even any one to whom I could speak on Talmudic subjects;' ^{90a} and in another letter he says, 'the Shulḥan Aruch Oraḥ Ḥayyim is forgotten here, and nearly also the Yoreh Deah.' ⁹¹

Communal organization progressed in so far as a proper Beth-Din seems to have been established, one of the Dayyanim being Eleazar Lieberman, who lived in London already in R. Hirschel's time. His full name was Eliezer Lieberman Speyer of Halberstadt, for thus he signs in the document II of Tishri 28, 1772. It is the same R. Eliezer who wrote to R. Hirschel after his departure from London. ⁹² Other Dayyanim were Simon b. Meshullam of Prague, Abraham Hamburger of Nancy, called Abraham Nancy, and Jacob b. Rabbi Eliezer. It is, however, quite possible that they were not paid Dayyanim, but private scholars only, whom the Rabbi invited to join him when he wanted to form a Beth-Din for the purpose of arranging a Get or Halizah ceremony.

^{90a} Cp. what R. Hirschel says above, part I, p. 22, and Letter IV of App. V.

⁹¹ Letter V of App. V.

⁹² Zevi, *Laz.*, p. 71; cp. above, p. 31.

The Rabbi's salary was £200 yearly, which very nearly was reduced during the American War. In a letter written to his brother on 1st Ijjar, 1780 (Letter III) he complains that since the Rabbi of the Hambro Synagogue, Meshullam Zalman Emden, had left, he had to do all the work without getting any remuneration for it. Although, in all probability, the Duke's Place people will claim some contribution from the Hambro Synagogue for his services, and as they had no intention of electing another Rabbi, may succeed in getting £50 yearly from them, that would not benefit *him*. Neither had he had any income from weddings at that Synagogue, as the Parnassim gave their members the choice to let either one of their own Hazamin officiate on such occasions, or to ask R. Tevele to perform the ceremony. It was on account of this permission that he had only one wedding at the Hambro Synagogue during a whole year, and that was when the daughter of an intimate friend of his, R. Leb Tosca, married. His brother, R. Meir, had asked him for pecuniary assistance, and R. Tevele answers that his income was scarcely sufficient for his own needs, especially in war-time, and had he not in better times invested a little money in Government bonds which brought him a little extra income, he could not make both ends meet. In spite of that, he says, there are at every Synagogue meeting proposals to reduce his salary! And 'then you imagine London is a Kehillah', he writes, 'far from it! I cannot explain it all in a letter, it could only be understood if told personally.' Similar remarks are found in Letter IV, written two years later on 22 Adar, 1782, at the time of the peace negotiations with America. The proposals for a reduction of the Rabbi's and other official's salaries continued to be put forward, but 'do not think', he says,

‘that this is done on account of my not being in the favour of my congregants, far from it, I have very many intimate friends here. It is simply the way of the land, which nobody can fully understand who has not lived here, just as little as they can realize in other countries the full meaning of the war with America, and even what the papers now print with regards to peace prospects.’ The powers of Parliament, the rights of the king and other political affairs are different in England from every other land, and in the same way is the Kehillah different from others, as well as the proportion of his income and expenditure, which no one else can judge but he himself, and he regrets having to refuse his brother’s request.

Two documents in MS. 4095 throw a light on the private life of London Jewry at the end of the eighteenth century. Mr. Zangwill, in his *Children of the Ghetto*, when he describes the story of a girl who in jest had a ring put on her finger and found herself married without her wish or even knowledge, seems to have taken the story from real life.⁹³ According to Jewish law,⁹⁴ if a man gives to a woman anything that is worth a ‘perutah’ (small coin) in presence of two Jewish witnesses, and says, ‘I herewith wed thee as my wife according to the Law of Moses and Israel’, that is sufficient to make it a valid marriage. This was used sometimes by wicked people as a means of extorting money from a rich man by marrying his daughter in this way, and then to make payment of a large sum the condition of giving her a ‘Get’ (divorce). In Zangwill’s novel the story is different, as the whole thing was meant

⁹³ See Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto* (London, Heineman, 1893), p. 51, and the same author’s *King of Schnorrers*, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Talm. B. Kid. 5 b. Shulh. Ar. Eb. Haezer, c. 27. 1.

as a joke only on the part of the young man, and it is interesting to find that in the time of Tevele Schiff^{94a} such things really happened, for two such cases are recorded in the documents which we print as Nos. 19 and 20 of Appendix V. In one instance Judah b. Joseph testifies that he performed the marriage ceremony on the girl Serche, daughter of Moses, with her consent, although she now denies that the ceremony ever took place. The other case was that of Simon b. Hayyim Levi and the girl's name was Mindel d. of Samuel. The fact that the bridegroom himself came forward as the chief witness in both cases, and that the girl denied having given her consent, seems to indicate that we have to deal with intentions of blackmail, against which could be argued that the parties appear to have belonged to the same class, and that, in case I, the young people had been on intimate terms with one another, but it would be unwise to draw any conclusion as to the state of morality among the London Jews from these incidents, which may have been to the Rabbi some of the most exciting ones in his quiet and smooth career.

Official functions, when he would have been expected to give an English address, very seldom occurred, and Rabbi Schiff knew probably very little English, although his Yiddish was often intermixed with English phrases.⁹⁵ When the need arose he had the assistance of English teachers to help him out of difficulties. Although it is stated that at the consecration of the Great Synagogue

^{94a} 'When Tevele Schiff was Rabbi in Israel and Dr. Falk the Master of the Tetragrammaton, a saint and cabbalistic conjurer flourished in Wellclose Square' (Zangwill, *ibid.*).

⁹⁵ He says, e.g., אבליגירן = *obligiren* for 'to oblige'; פאוועראבל = favourable; פארטיקלאר = particular.

in Duke's Place, in August, 1767, two years after his appointment, the 'High Priest pronounced the prayer for their Majesties and the Royal Family in English instead of in Hebrew as was usual',^{95a} he never acquired sufficient knowledge of the English language, so as to be able to speak it fluently. At the consecration of the re-built Great Synagogue in 1790 David Levi, author of '*Lingua Sacra*',⁹⁶ had to translate into English the Hebrew Dedication composed by R. Tevele. The daughter of Moses Hart,⁹⁷ founder of Duke's Place Synagogue, defrayed the expenses of rebuilding, by offering £4,000 for this purpose. Her name was Mrs. Judith Levy, widow of Elias Levy, son of Benjamin Levy, who had been her father's partner in business. The order of service for the consecration ceremony was composed by David Levi, who says on p. 7,⁹⁸ 'With munificent hands hath the right noble and virtuous

^{95a} See Picciotto, *Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History*, p. 141.

⁹⁶ The most extensive contemporary Hebrew-English dictionary published in three vols., London, 1777.

⁹⁷ Brother of Rabbi Uri Phoebush Hart, first Rabbi of Duke's Place (1690-1752).

⁹⁸ The full title of the booklet is: 'A song and praise to be performed at the Dedication of the Great Jews Synagogue, St. Jame's Duke's Place London, on Friday March 26th 1790 composed in Hebrew by the Rev. David Solomon Schiff, High Priest of the said Synagogue and translated into English by the order of the President and Treasurer thereof, by David Levi, Author of *Lingua Sacra*, etc. London: Printed by W. Justus No. 35 Shoemaker Row, Blackfriars, anno mundi 5558.' About Benjamin Levy and his children see the article of Mathias Levy in *Jewish Chronicle*, July 31, 1903. Judith Levy's biography is to be found in Granger's 'Museum'. She and her husband Elias Levy are buried at Alderney Road cemetery a few rows behind R. Tevele Schiff's grave. Elias Levy's tombstone seems to be a substitution for the original stone; it only bears the short inscription: (top) פ"נ פ"מ ב' אל' (middle) 'Elias Levy Esq.'. He died, according to the testimony of Falk's servant, on the 18th Shebat, 1750 (*MS. Adler* 2441, p. 26 B).

Judith Levy's tombstone inscription is still readable as far as the Hebrew text is concerned. It reads:

lady (David Levi in a footnote: "Mrs. Levi of Albermarle St., relict of the late Elias Levi, Esq.") bestowed a princely sum to exalt and beautify the house of God. In the gate will we rehearse her praise, in whose mind her father's noble deeds are imprinted (footnote by D. Levi: "The late Moses Hart, Esq., who, at his sole expense erected the first Synagogue on this site").' The verses and anthems by R. Tevele do not show special skill in Hebrew poetry; he writes a Rabbinical Hebrew, introduces acrostics on his own name (on pp. 4 and 6) רור ברבי שלמה הכהן, but neither these nor the blessing מי שברך for the donor, Judith, daughter of Moses = משה' בת ר', come up to the standard of his predecessor's writings. His sphere was the Talmud, and in that branch he was a master recognized by all. He laid the foundation to the office of Chief Rabbi by the general respect he enjoyed and by his learning which made his authority indisputable. Thus we find, that the community of Portsmouth stipulated in their minute-book that matters of dispute between the members 'should be brought before R. Tevele, Chief Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, London'.⁹⁹ Haham Moses Hachohen d'Azevedo refers to him in friendly and respectful

פ"נ

הגבירה מרת יטה בת המנוח
 פ"מ כ" משה ברעסלוי ז"ל
 אלמנת המנוח פו"מ כ' אלי' ז"ל
 שהלכה לעולמה ביום ד' כ"ה טבת
 ונקברת עש"ק ק"ז טבת
 תקנ"ז (?) לפ"ק

The English inscription is no more decipherable. The grave next to hers on the left is that of her son, but his name is not readable any more, except for the words 'son of Elias and Judith Levy'.

⁹⁹ See *J. Hist. Soc. Engl. Trans.*, vol. VI, pp. 114-51.

terms.¹⁰⁰ We are not surprised that he was generally liked when we read the letters he wrote to his brother R. Meir. There he shows us his lovable nature, his modesty, and unassuming simplicity, his upright and straight character. 'Please look well into this account', he says to his brother, 'and answer me as to each point separately, for, you know, I am a lover of orderliness'. The letter refers to a list of charitable donations which he sent to his brother for distribution (Letter VII of 22 Adar, 1782, Appendix No. V). On another occasion, in the matter of the Jewish boy's reprieve, he says, 'You know my nature, I like to be peaceful and keep my head clear' (Letter XI, 15 Ab, 1785). His modesty is revealed in an answer to his brother, who urges him to have some work of his printed. 'You ask me whether I do not think of printing something of my *Hidushim* (notes) on the Talmud. I do not approve of anything that is lengthy to be published, even if it refers to Maimonides or any other early commentator. . . . You say that some one who is unworthy might come and use the result of my studies, my words, as his own. I do not mind that at all—God will know. As for the purpose of leaving a name behind after 120 years (after my death) should I print a book—who will read long deliberations? To my mind the right thing to do before publishing a book would be, to give the MS. to two or three real scholars and let them examine it, but not in the author's presence, and only what they think good enough should be printed. I am sure in this way hardly any one would gain great fame, as probably only one page would be found worth printing out of a whole volume. As a matter of fact, he who studies for the sake of study (לשמים) and not for his

¹⁰⁰ See Buzaglo's pamphlet in *הנר*, *הצופה מארץ הנהר*, IV, p. 12.

own imaginary honour, to be mentioned among the great men, he does not mind whether much or little is said in his name. . . . If a rich man in whom Torah and greatness (riches) are combined would direct in his will that his notes should be dealt with in this manner when he has come to the end of his days, that would indeed be the only proper way, the right thing in the eyes of God and man, for then even the suspicion of hunting for imaginary honours would fall away. Only he who is quite sure of himself to be free from such vanity may do it in his lifetime' (Letter XII, 26 Sivan, 1787).

If Prof. D. Kaufman emphasizes the importance of preserving and editing minute-books of congregations, Hazkarah, and Memor-books, &c. (אוצר הספרות, vol. II, pp. 91 and 92), the more so applies this to private letters which contain particulars concerning the Jews generally, as in many instances they give references which are not to be found in any other written document, and would therefore otherwise remain unknown. In some cases they furnish confirmation of doubtful reports, or supplement missing links to the chain of events. The reader will find this in the letters written by and addressed to R. Tevele, which we print in the Appendix. Though of later origin than the collection of private letters edited by Drs. Alfred Landau and Bernhard Wachstein under the title *Jüdische Privatbriefe aus dem Jahre 1619* (Wien: Braumüller, 1911), the same qualities may be attributed to the letters printed in Appendix V, as the editors apply to their publication. They say in the Preface: 'Rightly has general attention been given in our times to these human documents out of which we can construe not only a picture of external circumstances, but also a reflexion of the feelings

and sentiments of the people of past ages'. (Einleitung, p. xv.) As far as Anglo-Jewish historical records go, I believe this is the first publication of Yiddish and Hebrew private letters. There are nineteen letters in all, and from the point of view of Anglo-Jewish history those written by R. Tevele himself and his son Moses to R. Meir Schiff are the most important. We hear the story of the Hazan Isaac Polak who had gone bankrupt and was put into prison. The community resigned itself to its fate to have to do without its reader, but when Atonement day was approaching 'many speak well of him and wish to get him returned to office', writes R. Tevele's son, Moses Schiff, on 14 Elul, 1781 (postscript to Letter VI). 'They say that whatever wrong he has done was not of his own free will, but he did it being misled by that man Hayyim(?). As is usual in Jewish communities, they follow the way of their forefathers; what the one loves, the other hates, and some are quite indifferent, do not care one way or the other, are neither friend nor foe. R. Isaac is still imprisoned, and, being a bankrupt, cannot regain his liberty unless the majority of his creditors agree to his liberation—such is the law of the country—and it will be difficult to get them all under one hat (to agree to it). It is a dishonour to the community, such outcasts as exist here are not to be found in any other town. It seemed all in vain, the judge had passed sentence and the matter appeared settled, but God helps those in trouble, and the community advised R. Isaac to present a memorial to the judge stating that the congregation had reserved him his post, and that he was really punished on account of some one else's fault. So far no answer has been received.' This R. Isaac Polak was reader of the Great Synagogue;

an engraving of him is in the possession of Mr. Israel Solomons in London.

In 1776 Parliament brought in a new law regarding passports, which made travelling more difficult. R. Tevele advises a certain Süsskind b. Jacob Schloss, of Frankfort, who had the intention of coming to London, to bring a proper passport and health certificate with him, or should even postpone his journey in case he had not left on arrival of the letter (Letter I).

We hear also something of the business connexions of London Jews. They dealt with Jews in Frankfort, Holland, and Italy. But R. Tevele knows nobody who had correspondents in Copenhagen which, he says, is like a suburb of Hamburg. Brisk business was done in East Indian wares. R. Meir made some suggestions to his brother that his son Moses (who, a year or two afterwards, became his brother-in-law by marrying R. Meir's wife's sister, Mindel Zinzheim) should try to do some business as commission agent. R. Tevele answers him on 1 Ijjar, 1780, that only East Indian goods are worth while dealing in, but to deal in woollen merchandise is not profitable because most of the German merchants order these goods from England direct from the manufacturer. To be an agent for export to Germany would necessitate having great credit here (securities) as the goods are sold on six-monthly bills. Besides, there would hardly be any profit attached to it. Moses Schiff later became agent for Isaac Speyer of Frankfort, whom we have already mentioned. On 20 Elul, 1782 (Letter V) Moses Schiff thanks Speyer for what he has done for him, and asks for further opportunities to act for him. R. Tevele's adviser in this matter was R. Jacob Rotterdam in London,

who acted as agent for R. Leb Haas¹⁰¹ and J. Schuster¹⁰² of Frankfort. This Jacob Rotterdam had also business connexions with Jacob Homel & Co.¹⁰³ (Letter IV).

It was R. Tevele's custom to send charitable gifts to relatives and poor people in his native town, to which he remained attached all his life. Through his brother he acted as intermediary between people in London and their relatives in Frankfort, and even accepted lottery stakes from his friend Moses Munk in Frankfort, and adds, 'Falk shall insure it', obviously referring to the Baal-Shem Samuel Falk (Letter III). Among the regular recipients of gifts from the Rabbi was his brother R. Meir himself, another brother Moses, his sister-in-law (mother-in-law of his brother Meir and of his son Moses), a certain Abraham Giessen, and the widows of Moses Trumm and Moses Platz. A certain Moses b. Leb Zunz, who lived in London, asks the Rabbi to let his stepmother know he was astonished to hear she was not satisfied with the allowance he and his brother, living in America, sent her. If, however, his other brother, who is studying at the Yeshiba in Pressburg, has any particular wish, he should write to his brothers and send the letter to R. Meir Schiff (Letter II). Reference is made to Abraham Emmerich's bankruptcy, which greatly astonished the Rabbi, who uses the phrase 'it is like fire in a cedar-tree', *אם באריות נפלה שלהבת*.¹⁰⁴ Abraham Emmerich is mentioned in MS. Adler 935, p. 91 (Minute-

¹⁰¹ Died Adar 11, 1789. See Hor., *FG.*, 3989; Dietz, p. 156.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 273.

¹⁰³ Son of Joseph, son of Isaac Hammeln, who was a son of Glückel von Hameln. See Kaufm., *Glückel v. Ham.*, p. xxxix.

¹⁰⁴ In Letter VII, to Isaac Speyer, R. Tevele refers to the bankruptcy of a London firm of bankers named Brown & Collinson, which involved a great many people, Jews and non-Jews. (See App. V.)

book of the Frankfort Beth-Din). He buys a seat in the Synagogue from Solomon Sinzheim in 1780 (*ibid.*, p. 114 b). His brother Meir had some dispute with the *גבאים*, the treasurers of the Frankfort congregation, and collected signatures in support of his plea. R. Tevele mentions several members of the Frankfort community who, he thinks, will sign the memorandum. Their names are: the children of M. Scheyer;¹⁰⁵ J. Kulpa;¹⁰⁶ Lima b. Zalman Haas;¹⁰⁷ David Cassel, son-in-law of Z. Cassel;¹⁰⁸ Hirsch Haas¹⁰⁹ and his nephew M. b. S. the Levi; Madl(?) and R. Jacob Kann.¹¹⁰ In connexion with this dispute R. Meir Schiff had complained to his brother that things had come to such a pass in Frankfort that many members gave up (*חזקת הקהל*) their membership in the community to join small *kehillas* in the neighbourhood, and R. Tevele says: 'I am sorry for the place and the graves of my ancestors that such a state of affairs should have arisen.' It is not unlikely that this refers to the persecution of R. Nathan Adler who, a year or two previously (1779), had been excommunicated, and in the year when this letter was written (1782) left Frankfort to take up the Rabbinate in Boskowitz. R. Tevele remarks at the end of these references, 'However, all bad things (*נזירות*) must pass some time or other', and he considers it his duty to see to it

¹⁰⁵ Moses Scheyer, who died 1 Ijar 1775; Hor., *FG.*, 3530.

¹⁰⁶ Juda (?), died 1785. Cp. Dietz, p. 176; Hor., *FG.*, 3887.

¹⁰⁷ Died 1789. Dietz, p. 136.

¹⁰⁸ Died 1812 (?). Hor., *FG.*, 4682.

¹⁰⁹ Died 5 Shebat 1796. *FG.*, 4203.

¹¹⁰ Jacob b. Beer Kann, died 15 Tam. 1784. *FG.*, 3835; Dietz, p. 164. His cousins were called Löw Beer, and had business relations with the brothers Abr. and Simeon Boas in Haag; see above letter of R. Tevele, No. VII. Cp. Dietz, *ibid.*

that his family's connexion with the community should be kept up for future generations, and for this reason he did not allow his membership of the community to lapse (Letter V).

On one occasion R. Meir Schiff asked his brother's help to obtain the post as Rabbi in Copenhagen (1776, Letter I). It is then that we hear who were R. Tevele's patrons at his election in London, as he approaches them to do similar service to his brother in this matter, and Aaron Goldschmidt writes to his nephew Jacob b. Mendele Kik¹¹¹ in Hamburg, who has reason to be thankful to his uncle, he having assisted him greatly in his business connexions, to recommend his cousin R. Meir Schiff to his friends and correspondents in Copenhagen. R. Tevele himself composes the letter for Goldschmidt, and sends a copy of it to his brother. He remarks among other things that the fact of his not having been Rabbi, but only Dayyan, should not be regarded as a fault. For R. Tevele himself was only Dayyan in Frankfort when elected as Rabbi to London, 'and thank God we are satisfied with our bargain'. R. Tevele also addresses a letter to R. Meir Hanover for the same purpose, in which he mentions that he helped him to obtain his present position, and was by this a means of his brother succeeding him as Dayyan in Frankfort. In London there was only one merchant who had direct correspondence with Copenhagen, writes R. Tevele, and that was a friend of the Rabbi of the Hamburger (Hambro) Synagogue, Meshullam Zalman Emden. To approach this man would be harmful to his cause, as the family of the Ḥaham Zevi would certainly try to obtain the post for one of their own family. He had, however, approached

¹¹¹ Probably Kik; cp. Grunwald, *Hamburg's deutsche Juden*, p. 270.

a certain R. Moses Wallich of London to write to his wife's stepmother, the widow of R. David Hanover, who was a native of Copenhagen, to write to her friends there. The letter bore no result, as R. Meir Schiff remained Dayyan in Frankfort till the end of his days. Before he obtained this post he was Dayyan in Vienna, where he signs the Statutes of the Hebrah-Kaddishah in 1763 (cp. *Mitt. z. jüd. Volkskunde*, 1910, Heft 33, p. 13).

R. Tevele himself tried at least twice, as far as we can ascertain, to change his position. In 1781 (Letter III) he aspired for the Rabbinate of Rotterdam, and reproaches his brother for not doing anything for him in this matter. The Rabbi of Amsterdam had apparently put some obstacles in his way, and 'who can stand up against this people?' he says, pointing again to the Emden family, the Rabbi of Amsterdam being then R. Saul, brother of R. Hirschel Lewin. The Rabbi of Halberstadt was elected but seems to have refused to go, the postal service being very irregular in those days on account of the war between Holland and England, he only received the news of this together with a letter informing him that the Rabbi of Emden had been elected. This haste must have been intentional, says R. Tevele.

Half a year later (Adar, 1782) he was anxious to become Rabbi of Würzburg, but the letter he wrote was lost on a boat which was sunk by enemy action, and he did not write again, but would have no objection if R. Meir could arrange it, although 'it rests with God what is good for me and my son, for our body and soul'. R. Levi Fanto (cp. גל ער, p. 62), Dayyan in Prague, had been elected to Würzburg, but did not go there. News did not travel fast in those days, and R. Tevele did not know of

the refusal until by accident he saw the signature of this R. Levi on a letter addressed to him by the Rabbinate of Prague. He writes thereupon to a friend of his, R. Moses Rofe (in Würzburg?), inquiring for the reason of R. Levi's not going, whether it was that the income from that Rabbinate had diminished of late, or for some other reason, as he can point out to him some one who would be open to entertain an offer if made to him, clearly referring to himself (Letter IV). R. Levi Fanto died on 23 Feb., 1782, of that, however, R. Tevele was not aware of at the time (*ibid.*).

Of interest is also a reference in the same letter to a Jew who had lived in England somewhere in the country among non-Jews, and gave up all his property to the man he lived with, for an annuity. When the Rabbi Gershon Pulitz of Nikolsburg¹¹² was still alive he wrote to him asking for assistance for the man's sister-in-law (his late brother's R. Jekl's wife) and children, and R. Tevele was successful in obtaining aid from the man whose name was David Fridland. Some time later, when his nephew Isaac, son of the said brother Jekl, came to England, the transfer of his property had already taken place, and he could not assist this nephew. Only after his death this Isaac succeeded in getting some money from the man who had the property by a compromise, but now there was no more hope of getting anything out of him. This R. Tevele writes to R. Meir Schiff in answer to an inquiry and request for help for some one of Fridland's family.

We get a glimpse of the Rabbi's homely character in the orders he gives to his brother in Letter II. He did not consider it beneath his dignity to order half a dozen 'white cotton caps not striped but plain white' (ניט וישטרייפט).

¹¹² Chief Rabbi of Moravia from 1753-72.

(מיט אייניגה קולערהר רק פשוט ווייס neither should they be sable caps', he adds, which was probably meant as a jest. We even find an order for half a dozen handkerchiefs, but these should not be white 'on account of the snuff-tobacco'. His wife Breinle having been dead for years (she died in 1772, see above), he had to trouble himself with these domestic trifles. The same letter (No. III) contains a postscript by his wife's niece Mindel, daughter of Solomon Sinzheim, who writes a very good Hebrew hand. This lady acted to all appearances as a kind of housekeeper, as R. Tevele describes her in Letter VIII, which is dated a year later (1782), as (בריהנרן): servant. In Letter XI R. Tevele mentions her already as his daughter-in-law, which letter bears the date 15 Ab, 1785, so that the marriage of Moses Schiff must have taken place between the years 1782-5. Mindel was quite a good Hebrew scholar, as will be seen from her postscript to Letter IV. The marriage was childless, and I have not been able to ascertain when Moses and Mindel Schiff died. Moses was apparently well to do; the Great Synagogue possesses a silver basin used by the Cohanim before reciting the priestly blessing, which was presented by Moses b. R. Tevele.

Before his death R. Tevele asked his son to have some of his manuscripts published, and Moses sent the manuscript of the book לשון זהב to his uncle, R. Meir, to prepare it for publication. We print in the appendix the title-page of this work written by R. Tevele himself, which proves that he intended this name for his book. Another manuscript containing answers to questions raised by the Tosafot against the explanations of Rashi in Tractate B. Batra, mentioned by R. Tevele in Letter IV, seems to have been lost.

R. Meir Schiff, who was Dayyan in Frankfort from 1768,¹¹³ and author of the work *דרך אמונה בלב ים* (Fürth, 1798), was already an old man when his brother Tevele died, and not able to copy and correct the manuscript, so as to make it ready for the printer,¹¹⁴ and he died on Aug. 2, 1808¹¹⁵ without having edited the work. Moses Schiff then sent the manuscript to his cousin R. Mordecai Adler, Chief Rabbi of Hanover, who was a nephew of R. Tevele (his mother, R. Beer Adler's wife, was R. Tevele's sister), but Moses himself died before the book appeared in print. After his death his widow and executors again approached Mordecai Adler to fulfil the wish of his late uncle R. Tevele, and on his advice the publication was entrusted to his sons Gabriel Adler, Chief Rabbi of Meiringen and the province of Schwarzwald, and Ber Adler of Frankfort, brothers of the late Dr. N. M. Adler, Chief Rabbi of London, and at last, in 1822, the work was printed in Offenbach under the title 'Leshon Zahab', which means the 'Golden tongue'. It consists of two folio volumes,¹¹⁶ and contains expositions on the Pentateuch and Talmud, Responsa, and various haggadic lectures. MS. Adler 2296 has apparently been utilized for this edition, although it contains other matter, not embodied in the book. The greater part of the manuscript is taken up by a commentary on Mishna Tractate Horayot, which is identical with Leshon Zahab, pp. 14 a to 19 b, but there are also several pages relating to Mishnah Zebahim and Menahot, and several Responsa.

Beloved by all who knew him, R. Tevele Schiff passed

¹¹³ See Hor., *FR.*, IV, p. 37.

¹¹⁴ See preface to *לשון זרה*.

¹¹⁵ Zunz, *Monatstage*, erroneously gives the date July 22, 1798; Hor., *FR.*, IV, p. 37, and Dietz, give the year 1807. See, however, *MGWJ.*, vol. 50, p. 607.

¹¹⁶ Vol. I contains 32 leaves; vol. II, 44 leaves.

away on the 23rd day of Kislev, 5552 (Dec. 17, 1791), and was buried in the ground at Mile End, which is also the resting-place of his son Moses. His funeral was a testimony of the general esteem in which he was held by Ashkenazim and Sephardim alike. The Bevis Marks Synagogue was represented by the Haham, three Dayyanim and five wardens, while all the Ashkenazi synagogues sent representatives.¹¹⁷ His death is recorded in the Hazkarah Book of Worms, where he is praised as having been 'versed in the secrets of the Torah, which he studied all his days'.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ See Picciotto, *Sketches*, p. 223.

¹¹⁸ Hazkarah-Book of Worms has the following record of his death :

י"א ה'ה' חזק מוהרר דוד טעבלי בהמנוח כה"ר זלמן שיף כ"ץ ז"ל מפ"ד בעבור שכל ימיו היה מתמיד בלימודו והי' תורתו אומנותו והי' בקי בחדרי תורה והי' בו כמה מידות ומעלות טובות, והי' אב"ד ור"מ בק"ק לונדון יותר משלשים שנה וגם בקהלתנו הי' משכנו שורה בקלויס יותר מעשר שנים וגם הי' דיין בק"ק פפ"ד ויורשיו נתנו עשרה זהו לצדקה בעבורו [נפטר ונקבר בש"ט בק"ק לונדון ביו . . .]. The date is missing, and it should be added : כ"ג כסליו תקנ"ב. See *Kobez-al-Jad*, vol. III, p. 53.

TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTION OF RABBI TEVELE SCHIFF.

His grave is next to that of his son Moses in the burial-ground at Mile End.

פ"נ

חמדה גנוזה מזה בן מזה אדוננו
מ(ורינו) הגאון הגדול
המפורסם מהורר דוד טעבלי הכהן זצו"קללה
בן המנוח הרבני מו"ה זלמן שיף כ"ץ זצ"ל
מילידי ודיינא דק"ק פפ"דמ ושם האמת
הוציא משפט ועשה בתורה ועל (ברכיו?)
נתגדלו תלמידיו (הרבה?) אל השערה הגיע . . .
תחלה נבחר פה קהלתנו לרב ומורה ורביץ תחת משא
הרבנות עשרים ושבע שנים בחנינה יתירה
צופה היה להוליך במישור לעמי הארץ מ . . .
בפצע . . . לקרובים ורחוקים היה (ליועץ?)
(והנה תמיד?) בתורת ה' כאשר פעלו יניד
א . . . צדיק לשון זהב ותורת אמת הית' בשפתיו? (בפיהו?)

Mr. Sigmund Seeligmann of Amsterdam, the well-known scholar and collector, was good enough to send me a copy of a leaflet in his possession, containing two elegies on the death of R. Tevele, composed by Isaac^{118a} and Solomon, sons of Eleazar Keyzer of London, the one thirteen, the other ten years of age. The leaflet, measuring 26 x 24 cm., was printed by their uncle, Abraham Keyzer in Amsterdam, and bears the date, Tuesday, 24th of Kislev, 1791, while Abraham Keyzer's note, giving the ages of the boys, is dated 22 Shebat of the same year. The versatility in Hebrew of these young boys was indeed quite remarkable, and the verses well worth printing. 'David, King of Israel, has fallen', exclaims Isaac, who appears to have been the elder, 'his flock will not be guarded any more by his love and piety, their shepherd is dead who has loved them as a father loves his son. Woe to thee, O London! where is to be found a man, a scholar like the one thou hast lost? What was thy sin, that thy punishment is so great?' Such words from the pen of a boy of thirteen show at least that the Rabbi was held in high esteem, and was beloved by his community.

(וריש) ד"ת בביה"מ וידע
ששה סדרי משנה בע"פ ואלה הם יעידו
על מעשיו הנעימי (הנאים?) . . . שבק (לן
חיים) . . . אדונינו) הרב (ביום ב' כ"ג כסליו
ונקבר בכ"ד בו שנת) תקנ"ב לפ"ק
תנצ"ב'ה'

^{118a} The leaflets are reprinted and translated in App. VIII. Isaac Keyzer had a son called Eleazar, who in later years married a daughter of the Parnass Jacob Norden. Rabbi Solomon Hirschel sends him as wedding present a copy of the book *בנין אריאל* by his uncle R. Saul of Amsterdam. The inscription on the cover of the book is printed in golden lettering, and reads: *דורן דרשה להחתן הקצין כ"ה ליור ש' בן המנוח פו"מ כ"ה איצק קיזור ז"ל וחתן פו"מ כה"ר יעקב נורדין יצ"ו*. The book is in the Beth-Hamidrash library in London.

III

R. Solomon Hirschel.

BORN in London on the 19th of Shebat, 5522 (1761) as the youngest son of R. Zevi Hirschel Lewin and his wife Golde, he was not quite three years old when his father left London for Halberstadt, in the spring of 1764. He was only eleven years old when his father entered into office in Berlin in 1772, and there it was that the most important years of his early training were spent. The Berlin community was then on a not much higher standard of culture and modern education than most of the Polish congregations of our days. Mendelssohn and his circle met with opposition even in Berlin, and although R. Zevi Hirsch had recommended Mendelssohn's German Bible translation, he did not give his son Solomon a very extensive schooling in other matters than Rabbinics. It is quite certain that R. Solomon never possessed the title of Doctor from any University, although he was generally styled as such in the later period of his life, and often uses the title himself in his letters (see later). He became a recognized Rabbinical scholar and, like his father and his brother Saul, a master of Hebrew style. He married at the age of seventeen Rebecca Koenigsberg, and later became Rabbi of Prenzlau in Prussia. The Rabbinate of the Great Synagogue was vacant after the death of Rabbi Tevele Schiff for a number of years. There is no reliable record of the exact date of R. Solomon Hirschel's election. While Mr. Picciotto mentions 1803,¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ *Sketches*, p. 307.

Solomon Bennett¹²⁰ gives 1802 as the year of his election. In 1805 was published a sermon held 'on the day appointed for a general Thanksgiving for the success of the Fleet off Trafalgar', arranged and rendered into English by Joshua Van Oven,¹²¹ and this was, as is stated there, 'soon after R. Solomon's accession to office'.¹²² All these dates seem, however, incorrect according to the tombstone inscription of R. Saul, brother of R. Solomon. He is described as 'son of Rabbi Zevi Hirsch נ"ר, Rabbi of Berlin, formerly Rabbi of our congregation, and brother of our Rabbi Solomon'. As R. Zevi Hirsch died in 1800, and was still alive when the tombstone was set, as indicated by the letters נ"ר (= may his light continue to shine), R. Solomon Hirschel must have come to London prior to 1800 (cp. *JQR.*, N.S., vol. IX, p. 408). One of his qualifications which made him particularly recommendable for the post was the fact of his having been born in London.

The Rabbinical duties at the Great Synagogue were in the interval discharged by the Rabbi of the New Synagogue, Moses Myers (died 1804); nevertheless, there seem to have been continual differences between the three Ashkenazi Synagogues, and not the least reason for these frictions was the practice of enticing members of one Synagogue to another. In 1804 an amalgamation of the three Synagogues, as far as finances were concerned, was contemplated by L. de Symons, but without success. The only result, achieved through the influence of the new

¹²⁰ See *The Present reign of the Synagogue of Duke's Place Displayed, &c.*, by Solomon Bennett. London, printed for and published by the author, No. 475 Strand, 1818, p. 66.

¹²¹ See *Voice of Jacob*, II, p. 68.

¹²² In 1805 R. Solomon gives an approbation to the first edition of Wolf Heidenheim's *Mahzor*. See vol. IX (*Shabuot*), Rödelheim 1805.

Rabbi, was an arrangement as to the contributions of the Synagogues towards the relief and burials of the poor. These treaties were renewed every five years, until in 1838 a somewhat closer union of the three Ashkenazi congregations was brought about through the endeavours of Mr. N. M. Rothschild. The convention then signed did not constitute them into a United Synagogue, as each congregation retained its independence. The agreement chiefly referred to a concert of action in charitable matters, and was, in a way, the forerunner of the Board of Guardians.

Under Rabbi Solomon's guidance the community grew from day to day, and the Duke's Place Synagogue was rightly called the Great Synagogue, its development being the most marked. He is reported to have been very tolerant towards the failings of others during the early days of his activity in London. He did not repulse those who transgressed the Law, but tried to influence them by kind words and often by a little pleasantry. The story is told of a prizefighter who became a religious man through one kindly act of the Rabbi. On Sabbath R. Solomon wore a long white silk robe, and was once, clad like this, on his way to Synagogue attacked by a few hooligans. The Jewish prizefighter saw this and dispersed the crowd. Thereupon the Rabbi took his rescuer's arm and walked with him to Synagogue. On being approached for having in this way shown appreciation of one who publicly transgressed the Law, he answered: 'The path of repentance is open to all'. It is reported that from that day the prizefighter became an observant Jew. Yet another tale of a different tendency has remained in circulation, showing that, where the observance of the Law and orthodox customs were concerned, Rabbi Solomon knew no com-

promise. Asher Goldschmid, one of the principal members of Duke's Place, once wore his boots instead of slippers, as is customary, when called up to the Law on Atonement Day. The Rabbi ordered him to descend from the reading desk. It was Goldschmid's custom to send the Rabbi a present of fish for every Succot. On the eve of that festival following this Yom-Kippur the Rabbi told his wife to buy fish, as he did not think Goldschmid would send any. The fish, however, arrived, and with it an ornamental box containing a doctor's certificate which stated that it would have been injurious to Goldschmid's health had he worn slippers on Yom-Kippur.¹²³

Especially strict was R. Solomon as regards the religious conduct of the Shoḥetim. MS. Adler 2261 gives the names of those authorized by the Rabbi during the years 1822-42, and contains even some who were authorized by his successor, Dr. N. M. Adler, the latest date being Ab, 1845. Every Shoḥet had to give the following undertaking: 'I herewith undertake by giving my hand to the Rabbi, that I shall not slaughter (any animal) where there is another Shoḥet authorized by the Rev. Rabbi of London; even for my own use I shall not do so. At any time, should the Rabbi forbid me, if only by word of mouth even, to slaughter, I shall obey him at any place I may be. I further promise not to shave my beard and not to drink wine that is not specially prepared for the use of Jews.' Some of the names mentioned in the manuscript are of interest. Jonas Levy from Exeter receives authority to act as Shoḥet for Philipp Symonds in Cincinnati, Ohio, United States of America (No. 5). In 1788 Mr. Abrahams of Van Demons (Diemen's) Land shakes hands on his appointment

¹²³ צבי לעדיק, p. 177, note 21.

(No. 49), while on Jan. 5, 5589 (1829) Arjeh b. Jacob Ḥazan in Jamaica (he writes 'Jamicar') signs the pledge. The list of places in England where a Shoḥet was employed is especially interesting, and we give therefore in the Appendix the whole list of the 152 Shoḥetim mentioned in the MS., together with the date of their authorization and the place of activity. Some of them could not write Hebrew, and the undertaking is written in English; others could not even sign their name otherwise than in English. The place of origin of these Shoḥetim was in most cases Poland and Russia, but also Germany is fairly often represented, e.g. Moses b. Leb Deutz of Frankfurt called himself Moses Levy, and was Shoḥet in Dover (No. 25); Michael Zalman b. S. Pollak of Schoenlanke was in Plymouth (No. 10), and Moses b. Hirsch Lissenheim (No. 109) signs 'from Schoenlanke'. Michael Elijah b. R. A. hails from Ravitsch (Nos. 15 and 72), while Simon b. Jacob came from Wreschen in Posen (No. 75), as well as Shelomo Zalman b. Rabbi Eleazar Schottlaender, whose father had been Dayyan there (No. 97). Breslau (No. 100), Nürnberg (Nos. 105 and 137), Posen (No. 128) are all represented, but we find names even from Hungary (No. 50), Galicia and Holland (Neumegen, No. 12). In one case R. Solomon adds to the usual undertaking that the Shoḥet in question (Isaac Jacob b. A. Cohen) promises not to officiate in Oxford, which points to the probability that there was already some one else authorized for that place, and we must at least infer from it that several Jews were domiciled then in the famous University town, while to-day only two or three Jewish families are permanent residents there, and they do not require the services of a Shoḥet.^{123 a}

^{123 a} MS. Adler, 2257, p. 25, mentions: Mr. Wolf Harris, resident in Oxford in 1839.

Bidefield could also boast of such an official, and I was unable to ascertain whether any Jews are to be found there at the present time. Cheltenham, Norwich, Bedford, Chichester, Canterbury, Scarborough, Greenwich, are likewise worth mentioning. In 1845 Sir Isaac Lyon Goldschmid engages Edward Himes (Hyams?) as special Shoḥet for himself (No. 144); that, however, occurred after the election of Dr. N. M. Adler. During the vacancy the pledge was given to the Beth Din.

The Beth Din in R. Solomon Hirschell's time consisted of two Dayyanim and a Sofer (scribe). MS. Adler 2257 contains the short minutes of the Beth Din from the years 1833 (5 Tishri, 5594) until 1855.¹²⁴ The first case recorded is a divorce, given in the county of Guilford [במטרת גילספורט] ¹²⁵ by Isaac b. David to his wife Hannah daughter of Alexander, and the officiating Rabbis were R. Solomon Hirschell, R. Zeev Wolf (who soon afterwards died, as he is styled ז"ל וואלף ז"ל), and one R. Solomon (יהוה"ר שלמה). In the second case the Dayyanim were R. Zeev Wolf, who is now called Gallin [(?) גאללין] (or מ"ה זאב וואלף גאללין ז"ל) and R. Ḥanoch Zundel of Jerusalem, while in the cases Nos. 3 and 4 (Tebet, 1838) the Dayyanim were R. Azriel b. David Levi and the said R. Ḥanoch Zundel¹²⁶ (p. 1 a).

¹²⁴ The manuscript is a quarto volume of sixty-five leaves—fol. 9 is missing—and represents apparently the notes of the Sofer (and afterwards Dayyan) R. Aaron Lissa. The signatures of neither R. Solomon Hirschell nor Dr. N. M. Adler are to be found there, but generally the Dayyanim signed the book.

¹²⁵ Page 5 b is mentioned a divorce, given at 'King's Bench near London' . . . למתא לונדון, במטרת קינס בענש הסמוך למתא לונדון, and a note added: וכן כתב בנוסחא מגט אחד שהי' ג"כ בקיגם בענש בשנת תקע"ו במטרת קינגם בענש הסמוך למתא לונדון דיתבין.

¹²⁶ R. Ḥanoh's signature on p. 3 a is: נאום חנוך זונדל בהרב מ"ה ז"ה. צבי הירש זצ"ל ה"ה.

In case 5¹²⁷ Judah Leb b. Aaron Moses figures as one of the assessors, but his name does not occur again, and instead of him R. Arjeh Leb b. Rabbi Issachar Ber of Krotoschin officiated as Dayyan.¹²⁸ He occupied the position from 1833 and his signature as well as that of R. Azriel b. David Levi (who always signs first and appears therefore to have been the senior Dayyan), and of R. Aaron Lisser appear throughout the whole MS. R. Aaron acted generally as secretary except in the years 1841 (p. 31 a) to 1845 (p. 39 a), when R. Eliezer b. Uri Lisser was Sofer.

The minutes in MS. Adler 2257 refer mostly to divorce cases, of which about 13 to 15 took place every year. There are many instances of conversions to Judaism, mostly of women who were about to marry Jews, and others who lived with Jews and had children from them, in which cases the children were likewise converted. The English law did not permit conversion to Judaism. The 'Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness' of 1698 provides: that if any person 'having made profession of the Christian religion within this realm shall by writing printing teaching or advised speaking, deny any of the Persons of the Holy Trinity to be God shall from henceforth be disabled to sue in any court of law or equity or to be guardian of any child, or executor or

מבת: יו"ב, יא נמבל לפנינו ח"מ דוד. ¹²⁷ Son of Mr. Samuel Alia St. ב"ר שמואל דוב הנולד לו מנכרית והוא בן חמשה עשר שנים ומעתה הוא ראוי לבוא בקהל ישראל ובעודו במים עד צוארו קבל לפנינו ח"מ כל דין ודת תורתנו הקדושה, נאום עזריאל בהמנוח מ"וה דוד הלוי ז"ל נאום יהודא ליב בכ"ה אהרן משה זצ"ל נא' ח"ק אהרן ב"ר מליסא.

נא' ארי' יהודא ליב בהרב מו"ה יששכר בער: ¹²⁸ His signature is: מקראמאשין. His father, R. Issachar Beer, it seems, died about 1838; his son puts זצ"ל for the first time on 4 Heslvan 5599 after his name (p. 24 b).

administrator of any person, or capable of any legacy or deed or gift and shall also suffer imprisonment for the space of three years without bail or mainprize from the time of such conviction' (H. S. Q. Henriquez: *Jews and the English Law*, London, 1908, pp. 13-14). This Act enabling criminal prosecution against Jews who obtain proselytes from Christianity, though never acted upon, still remains in the Statute-Book as part of the Law of England (*ib.* p. 18). During the Rabbi's tenure of office a non-Jew who desired to convert to Judaism had to go to Holland or other places on the Continent to undergo the ceremony, the London Beth Din only confirmed¹²⁹ the act by the repetition of Tebila (טבילה) or in cases where the authority of the continental Beth Din was not sufficiently proved (New York, p. 57 b).¹³⁰ The majority of these people went to Rotterdam, some to the Hague and Amsterdam, others to Elburg, but a case from Paris is also recorded. This refers to a lady called Sarah, who was engaged 'to one of the Rothschilds' in 1840, and the minute book states 'she was obliged to come to London from Dublin to undergo again the ceremony of the ritual bath (p. 29 a).¹³¹ Conversions which took place in Holland are recorded even on the last page of the MS. of the year 1855; a Dr. Samuel, who is often mentioned, acted as Mohel in cases of conversion of men.

The MS. is full of other important information relating

¹²⁹ Page 3 b (19 Tebet 1833) : ... הסכים לילך לק"ק אמשטרדם להיות : נישואין שם מחמת שאין רשות במדינה הזאת לגייר שום אדם.

¹³⁰ כי מעולם לא הכשרנו גטין הבאים מאמריקא.

¹³¹ סיון : יום ה' כ"ב נטבלה בפנינו בד"צ הגיורת שרה אשר נתיירה ב"ק פאריז והיא מיועדת לאחר מן האחים הנקראים Rothschilds ומחמת טעם הכמון הוצרכה לבוא הנה מק"ק דאבלין לטבול פעם שנית ומעתה היא . . . מותרת להנשא לישראל חוץ מכהן . . . (follow the signatures of R. Azriel b. David, R. Aaron Lissner, R. Arjeh Jehuda Leb Krotoschin).

R. Solomon was asked to make an Erub (עירובי חצרות) for the inhabitants of that courtyard to enable them to carry from one house to the other on Sabbath days, for which purpose the Rabbi appeared and addressed the new residents with words 'entering the hearts', impressing upon them the importance and the holiness of the Sabbath day, and made them promise not to carry *outside* that court (p. 23). The ceremony took place on the 6th of Tammuz, 1838.

At other times cases of less pleasant character called for the attention of the Beth Din. Mention is made of people who are transported to Sidney for a number of years, and the wife commits adultery in the meantime. Cases of the marriage trick (see above, p. 467) are recorded several times. Civil cases, which as a rule form the greatest part of a continental Beth Din's activity, were hardly brought before the London Rabbinate, unless it be that they were recorded in another book, against which speaks the fact that one or two are recorded. On p. 29 b we find the claim of Zeev Wolf Raphael (רעפאל) of Cologne (מק"ק קעלין) against Meir, the Reader of the New Synagogue, for the return of a bag of money containing £475. Raphael had given him a sack in which were two bags, but only one was found on reopening the sack. The Beth Din decides that although there is not a shadow of doubt upon the honesty of the Ḥazan Meir, he was, as guardian of the money handed to him, responsible for the loss, and would have to pay the whole money claimed if Raphael confirms by oath that the sack contained the amount. In order to free Raphael from the oath the parties agree that R. Meir should pay him £315 by monthly instalments of £5 each (27 Tammuz, 1840, p. 29 b).

Of the further contents of the MS. are to be mentioned a copy of a Responsum of R. Akiba Eger, Rabbi of Posen, in matters of a Get. The letter was received by R. Solomon on Friday, 3 Kislev, 1835, and he is addressed as לַכְּבוֹד חֲבִיבִי הַגָּאון הָאֲמִיתִי הַמְּפֹרָס מו"ה שְׁלֵמָה נ"י א"ב ר' לֹוֶנְדֵן (p. 7 b).

A Responsum by R. Solomon in answer to a question addressed to him by Jacob (of?) Sunderland, referring to a mistake found in a scroll of Law is found on p. 22 b, while on p. 35 a is a document of testimony from Manchester signed on 17 Heshvan, 1843, by Simon b. Reuben, Parnas of the congregation, Abraham b. Jacob Benjamin Zeev Franklin, warden of the Hēbra Kadisha; Eliezer b. Abraham Judah, and Israel Joseph, son of the Rabbi Aaron Mirels, Shoḥet and Reader of the Manchester community. The testimonial referred to the conversion in Rotterdam of a lady, who, accompanied by Isaac, son of the warden Abraham Franklin, i.e. Dr. I. Franklin, went to Rotterdam and brought the document of the Beth Din from there to Manchester.

R. Solomon was, as is apparent from the foregoing, conscientiously and strictly religious, and was recognized as an authority in Rabbinic Law. The community appreciated their Rabbi, and held him in high esteem to the end of his days. We hear in 1841 that 'at a banquet held at Birmingham the health of the Chief Rabbi was drunk, everybody rising in respect'. This was no more than he deserved. His whole life was devoted to the care of his congregants. Even their private interests were furthered by him where and whenever he could be of help to them. We have, fortunately, in MS. Adler 4160 a number of letters preserved which give us an account of the last

fourteen years of his life and activity. This MS. contains copies of letters of R. Solomon in Hebrew and English, dealing with family affairs and official correspondence. The MS. consists of 269 folios in large 4to, of which fols. 39-95, 98 a, 100 a, 160 b, 165 b, 187 a, 189 a, are entirely blank, while others are only half filled. The English letters cover most of the written pages. The dates extend from 5586 (1826) till 5600 (1840). He signs mostly 'S. *Hirschell*', not *Herschell*, and the address of his residence is given as '5 Bury Court'. The MS. represents a wealth of material not only for Anglo-Jewish history, but also for the History of the Jews in America, always closely related to the same, and to the Jews of Poland and Russia. His correspondence with Poland was so large that he had to petition the Government in respect of letters sent to him without the postage having been paid by the sender. This document is written on Nov. 18, 5588 (1727), and is addressed to 'Francis Freely, Esq.' (MS. Adler 4160, p. 163 b), and a few passages of the same may be quoted: '... In the first place I beg leave to acquaint the Honourable Board that having passed the early part of my life in study of several of the Jewish Colleges in Poland, as well as having officiated for a time as Chief Rabbi in that country, I became generally known throughout the several congregations therein, and having since been called to that office in (p. 163 a) this great and important metropolis, it is a natural consequence that all those who have no commercial or natural connexions in London fly to apply to me as a resort to assist their various wants or inquiries, besides, as the principle organ of Religious or Statistical regulations, a considerable correspondence is necessarily imposed on me with respect to marriages, divorces, &c., &c.,

those combined causes join to overwhelm me with letters which in no way concern me, and induce an expense far beyond my means to supply, and from my unwillingness to return letters which appear to have the most distant probability of being important to poor persons although unknown, I am in possession of a considerable number for which I have paid the postage, but which I neither know whom to deliver or expect to be repaid.

Great as this evil may be, I should (be) content to sacrifice all that I can for the benefit of the many wretchedly poor persons who are concerned, but the additional expense of the register renders this impossible, and on this point I request more minutely to enter into explanation in order to account for the number that arrive under this increased expense. It is greatly to be lamented that the Post Office regulations, and certainly a great number of delivery of letters sent by that conveyance are in great number of foreign states far inferior to that of this country's great commercial emporium, but most particularly is it to be deplored throughout Poland and perhaps Russia and nowhere so much in respect the communications for the smaller towns and villages therein, seldom does a letter from a private individual, unless a regular commercial established house, arrive at its destination whether the money received for postage is unaccounted for and the letter destroyed I will not venture to assert, but certain it is that if any person wishes to insure its transit it has uniformly been found expedient to register the same as then the office receipt is brought back to the sender, this part will account for the number of letters arriving with such a guarantee in this Country even from poor people to whom such letter is of vital importance, so strong indeed

is this truth that I have very frequently lost many important letters sent from my own family whom I have forbidden to register (such warnings are found in many of the Hebrew and Yiddish letters of this MS., e.g. pp. 10 b and 23 b), and very often receive letters from the circumatious (?) sorrow on that account. The forbidding the parties to register is impossible as few come from the same source, the number arriving are in great part from new and strange correspondents.

The evil of which I complain and hope for some arrangement to be made by the Honourable Board for my relief comprehending the levity to be wished for in behalf of the poor distressed correspondence is: the charge made by the London Office for Registry, which infinitely surpasses the postage. I am quite alive to the possible opening this may form for fraud, but the cases that come under my observation are in no way connected with mercantile or commercial concerns. The subjects generally consist of enquiries from wives after husbands, children after parents, subjects alas lately becoming too frequent in consequence of some severe Russian Decrees against our devoted nation, or professional letters respecting divorces, &c., &c. I am aware that in many instances where I have sent the parties themselves to claim their letters that the Registry fee has generally been remitted, but I wish it to be understood that I have never purposely sent them with an expectation that such would be necessary consequence. The Office must be best judge of its own actions. Where a particular request from me should be presented, stating the inability of the party to pay . . .'

What better proof is required for the saintly nature, kind heart, and at the same time for the honest, business-like manner of our Rabbi than this his own letter, which,

I believe, was written by his own hand, although most of the English letters were written by others according to his instructions, as he himself says in one of these letters. That the Post Office authorities handed out letters from abroad to poor people without making them pay the postage, was obviously done out of regard for R. Solomon Hirschel, and proves that he had influence even in non-Jewish quarters. Of this we have also other indications in this MS.

The Duke of Sussex was a great friend of the Jews; reports were current that he knew Hebrew which he had studied under the Rev. Solomon Lyon of Cambridge, and that 'he read daily portions of the Bible in the grand old language in which it was originally written', says Mr. Picciotto (*Sketches*, p. 286). Rabbi Solomon seems to have been well acquainted with him, as we see from a letter which he sent to the Duke in 1840 after a dinner at the house of one of the Goldsmids. The letter reads (MS. Adler 4160, p. 106 a, middle):

'May it please Your Royal Highness:

I respectfully crave Your Royal Highness permission to offer my humblest apologies for having withdrawn from Mr. Goldsmids without offering my humble duty to Your Royal Highness: but as I felt very unwell and did not wish to derange the party, I left the house without bidding farewell to any one.

That it may please the great and merciful Lord of all long to preserve and prosper Your Royal Highness, the friend of Israel, the zealous patron of justice humanity and liberality is the sincere wish of Your Royal Highness faithfully and obedient . . .

5 Bury Court City

24 June 5600 a.m.

To His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex.'

We have also other correspondence with non-Jews. At the time of the blood-libel in Damascus (1840), when Sir Moses Montefiore and M. Crémieux played such a splendid rôle in vindicating their brethren in the East and the Jews in general, R. Solomon Hirschel apparently declared publicly on oath that Jews never use nor have ever used human blood in connexion with any of their ceremonies. The MS. contains a 'copy of a letter addressed to Dr. Hirschel' by a Mr. John Joseph Stockdale of Gloster Gate, Regents Park, dated July 4, 1840, wherein the writer reminds the Rabbi that his oath, 'pure in its intention and spirit as I am satisfied it is, may not go farther than you contemplate. According to our Chronologists in the year of the world 2106—or when the L—d G—d Omnipotent constituted Abram and his seed by Isaac, G—d's peculiar people, he appointed *circumcision* as the seal of such covenant. Should no blood be shed in your rite of circumcision your oath is, I admit literally correct; but if circumcision induce blood, I submit it to your consideration.' Although the writer adds: 'Permit me to add, I could not for an instant implicate the sacred purity and propriety of what you meant to swear, "no use of human blood in any human rite", I believe your object to be truth, charity, and humanity, pursued with zeal, which I wish were universal. Pardon me, who I am an unworthy Christian, but not less an admirer of G—d's peculiar people, of whom your ancestors and Self for more than ten generations have been chief spiritual guides . . . pardon me I repeat the bold, but not unholy intrusion' (pp. 104-5).

We find no answer of the Rabbi recorded. The writer's bad faith was apparent, for, if he knew anything about Judaism and Jewish rites, he must have known that even

at the ceremony of circumcision, the blood itself is not used, but is washed off and dried up in the ordinary surgical way. The Rabbi therefore probably thought it best not to answer, for he did not believe in polemics with people of other faiths. Such polemics could only bring about conflicts between the adherents of different religions. The Rabbi says so plainly in a letter to Rev. T. Smith (p. 135 b), which reads: 'Dr. Hirschell's compts to the Rev. Mr. T. Smith, assures him that his occupations have been too multifarious to allow him to peruse the sermon sent, and having long made up his mind not to enter into Polemical Correspondence on religious subjects seeing that each Party remain of the same opinion still, and that they only produce and augment a bitterness of spirit, he must decline replying to the questions proposed on the verses of Daniel, which have so long been subjects of dispute and of acknowledged mystery. Neither can he consider the tone of the second note enticing, nor the threat of publication imperious enough to induce him to alter his resolution of avoiding all conflict between religionists.

5 Bury Court

Nov. 25th 5591 (1831).'

The Rev. T. Smith was probably in league with the 'London Society' for Promoting Christianity among Jews, founded in 1808, which at the time this letter was written, unfolded a feverish activity among the Jews, and not always without success. The Rabbi, although he did not enter into public discussions, did his best through activity among his own congregants, to frustrate the missionaries' efforts. Among the leaves of the MS. (between pp. 105-6) I found a loose letter addressed to a Mrs. Magnes, asking her to help her son-in-law in bringing up his children in

the faith of their Fathers. 'I feel extremely sorry to state to you this most unpleasant affair of your Daughter, which I suppose you are already acquainted with, who after receiving so frequently your kind assistance in perhaps more than is in your power, has thrown herself away with her 2 children. But what is past can not be recalled. Yet as the children have been so fortunate that their Father arrived from America and in the midst of great sorrow and calamity has tried to rescue the innocent children and has taken them out of the hands of everlasting ruin, I feel it my duty knowing you for so many years always acting up to our religion in the strictest manner, and never withheld your assistance to the poor, where is there greater and important Charity than to save innocent children from the hands of גוים much more your own dear grandchildren which are considered as your own children, that you will do what lies in your power to assist their Father to keep them.' Equally important is another letter addressed to a member of his congregation warning him not to attend meetings of supporters of the London Society (p. 146 b). The letter was written on Feb. 22, 1827, but no name is mentioned. 'Sir, Allow me from the nature of my Office as well as from my conscientious feeling to call your attention to the necessity of not only duly practising the duties of our holy religion but also of avoiding in places where contrary doctrines are held forth as it appears you have done by attending at a Meeting held by the supporters of the London Society, where much was spoken by one who has abrogated the Jewish religion for reason best known to himself. The presence of any Jew at such a meeting is not only improper in itself, but gives an apparent sanction or approbation to it and, however un-

founded, encourages a false hope in the practice that their preaching has effect. Let me therefore caution you not to appear at any of such meetings lest it should appear as if you encouraged the system when you merely went from curiosity: (Prov.c.i.v. 15) *בני אל תלך בדרך אהם מנע רגלך מנתיבתם* and let me direct your attention to the fifth chapter of Proverbs which alludes particularly to the doctrines of such a society.

Nor let any personal figure (feeling?) against any member of your congregation induce you to act so unwisely merely in opposition to them *ישמע חכם ויוסף לקח* (*ibid.* c. i. v. 5). I hope you will take this in good part and believe it is transmitted to you in good faith and with the best wishes of your welfare by your

sincere friend.'

Other letters referring to missionaries are on pp. 201, 203, 235 a, 256, 259 b, 260. On one occasion he requests a provincial congregation to give every facility of returning to the Jewish fold to a man who seems to have repented his conversion to Christianity. If he publicly atones and in the Synagogue declares that he again wishes to adhere to the Jewish faith and to the tenets of Jewish Religion he should be received in a friendly manner and supported in his efforts to again become a true and faithful member of the Jewish community.

A 'Society for the prevention of Juvenile corruption' called itself likewise the 'London Society', and R. Hirschel writes with reference to this (p. 201): 'I need not add that your Society has my best wishes and that any assistance in my power will be readily afforded. I would recommend that your circular be sent to each of the Synagogues in the Metropolis, a list of which I add. I must however beg

leave to observe that the designation "London Society" which you have adopted is rather felicitous (unfortunate?) as you expose your laudable association to be compounded with, and mistaken for another "London Society" for promoting Christianity among the Jews, for the confusion of ideas resulting from this similarity of designation may tempt many to identify you with the other London Society which certainly does not number many friends among us.'

A missionary Mr. Wolff, by all appearances an apostate Jew, receives the following letter in answer to a request for an interview :

(p. 144 a) 'Copy of an answer to Joseph Wolff, a missionary for Palestine.

'Dr. Hirschel acknowledges the receipt of Mr. Wolff's letter, but feels it is inconsistent with his official situation as it is incongruous (*sic* !) with his personal feelings that he should admit Mr. Wolff to be capable of reporting any conversation between them on his return to Palestine.

'Dr. H. has however no objection to receive any observation Mr. W. may think for to communicate to him in writing.'

The position of the Jews in the East, and especially in Palestine, was a very precarious one at the beginning of last century. Cries for help from their starving brethren in the Holy Land reached the ears and hearts of the Jews all over the world. A society called Pekidim and Amar-kulim of the Jewish Congregations of the Holy Land was formed in Amsterdam under the presidency of R. Zevi Hirsch Lehren (1784-1853), and his brother Akiba Lehren (1795-1876), and a similar society was formed in London in 1827 (cp. *J. E.*, vol. VII, pp. 668-9). The appeal was made by the Rabbi at a meeting of the Sheḥita Committee quite spontaneously, and the Parnassim of the Synagogue

at St. Albans Place were offended that they had not been approached to become members of the committee set up for the purpose. R. Solomon Hirschel sends them a letter of explanation on June 12, 5597, and asks them for help 'in behalf of those unfortunate sufferers'.

The Committee consisted of J. Guedalla, Sir Moses Montefiore, and H. Bensusan. Similar societies under the name 'Hebrat Terumat Hakodesh' were formed also in America. In New York 'Geo. A. Fürst, Esq.' was Secretary to that Society, and the London Committee informs him in June, 1836, that they had resigned their offices, asking him to instruct the 'Rev. Dr. Hirschell as to the way in which it is your pleasure he should dispose of the moneys you have remitted to him' (p. 187 b; also p. 204 b). In Charleston, S. C., Mr. H. M. Hertz was chairman of the Society (p. 191, dated 5596; p. 204 a, Elul, 5597; p. 204 b, Jan. 4, 5597, when the money collected at Charleston is sent by Mr. S. C. Levy of that city to Messrs. Rothschild). A Mr. D. Davis of New York dedicates his lectures to the London Rabbi, who, on Aug. 27, 5597, sends him 'best thanks for the honour you confer on me. Permit me to assure you that I deeply sympathize with our brethren in the Western Hemisphere and am happy to find they are not inattentive to their best interests, moral and mental improvements, and consequently obedient to the Laws and observances enjoined by our G—d and bequeathed unto us by our fathers.

'That the Giver of all Good may vouchsafe to render your efforts to instruct his people as useful as they are will . . . and reward your zeal with all happiness here and hereafter is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir,

Yours very truly.'

The congregation of Kingston in Jamaica addresses several questions to the Rabbi. On one occasion he sends with his reply: Regulations for the Kadeshim (קדישים) on the eve of the 9th of Ab, 1841 (pp. 97 a-96 a), while in 1830 he had addressed a letter to 'Messrs. P. Lucas, H. Levy, D. Jacobs, of the British and German Congregations of the Jews in Kingston in Jamaica, dated Feb. 2, 5590.' He writes: 'Gentlemen, yours of the 9th Nov. ult. I have received and feel obliged by the polite mode in which my official actions are acknowledged and in return must express myself as ever ready and willing to promote the welfare of the English and German Congregation at Kingston.' The letter deals with a case of Halizah of a Mr. Benjamin Phillips. Another letter (p. 235 a) is addressed to Messrs. Lawrence, Jacobs, and Lyons, Committee of the Vestry, &c., Kingston.

R. Solomon was not always reluctant to enter into correspondence with non-Jews. A most cordial letter to Colonel Powell, who was a friend of a Mrs. Emanuel, is found on p. 113 b. The colonel had asked him for the meaning of the word קידוש (he spells it in English as 'Keedush'), which question is answered fully on three pages (113 a, b, and 112 b). The letter concludes, 'Dr. Hirschell regrets to learn that colonel Powell is indisposed. He had (as he thought) understood from Mrs. Emanuel that colonel Powell was desirous of personally to communicate with him, which was the reason why Dr. Hirschell appointed a time for the interview, as his advanced age and infirmities do not permit him at all times to receive visitors' (March 20, 5600).

A 'friend of Israel' receives the following answer (p. 124 b): 'Sir, the letter you addressed to me, and the call you and your friend Mr. Simpson have favored me

with afford me the agreeable satisfaction of knowing that among your people, the friends of truth and universal happiness are anxious for the restoration of Israel and address their supplications to the most High beseeching him to hasten the day "when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord". To us the scattered Remnant of Israel the certainty of our hope, the conviction "that God is not a man that he should lie, neither a son of men that he should repent", the perfect reliance which consequently it behoves us to place in his sacred promise—has during centuries of suffering such as no other nation ever experienced—afforded constancy unyielding and submission unrepining, without a murmur we receive the chastisement his paternal hand inflicts and tho' our fervent prayers implore his pardon and supplicate his mercy, submission to his will is our first duty.' The letter goes on to prove from scripture that Israel must wait patiently for redemption, which can only come from God alone (pp. 121-2 where the first page is re-written). Unfortunately the name of Mr. Simpson's friend, to whom the letter is addressed, is not disclosed.

Mr. Peppercorn, another non-Jew, author of the 'Laws of the Hebrews relating to the Poor', receives a letter of thanks from the Rabbi for a copy of this work. ' . . . The Rev. Dr. will take the earliest opportunity which his advanced age and pressing avocations permits, Mr. P's work by comparing it with the original of Maimonides and will not fail to acquaint Mr. P. with his opinion on that, till then he can say he is much pleased to see the truly philanthropic love of his Nation, enlisted as the Auxiliary of Charity and Benevolence.

' 5 Bury Court

' 2 May, 5598.'

Among letters to individuals we find such addressed to Sir Moses Montefiore (p. 218), to Amshel Mayer Rothschild (pp. 146 a, 183), Solomon Heine in Hamburg, Dr. Raphael, Leopold Dukes (pp. 208–9), and others of less note. Letters to provincial congregations fill by far the greatest part of the volume, and deal mostly with ritual questions such as the appointment or dismissal of a Shoḥet, marriages, and divorce cases, but also on occasions when internal strife, quarrels among the individual members disturbed the peace in a congregation, the counsel and advice of the Rabbi was invoked. Portsmouth gave him most trouble in this respect (pp. 99 a–107 b, 116 b, 119, 130 a, 135, 143 a, 148 b, 169 a, 221 a, 223 a, 229 a, 244 b, 261 a). One passage in a letter to this congregation (p. 106 b) could well be applied in our days. ‘Do not let selfish considerations stand in the way of unanimity and Concord. Those who hold offices should recollect that they are not appointed for the qualification (gratification?) of their vanity and self importance but for the good of the congregation. And those who do not hold office should remember that officers duly elected by the majority are entitled to respect and obedience. Do this and good feeling and propriety of conduct will soon be restored among you for G—^a will bless his people with Peace.’ Among other congregations are to be mentioned: Bath (p. 166 a); Brighton (pp. 109, 145 a); Bristol (pp. 167 a, 173 b, 176 a, 222 b, 227 b, 228 a); Birmingham (pp. 196 b, 212 a, 220, 225 b, 238 a, 239 b, 251 b); Canterbury (pp. 141 b, 181 a); Chatham (pp. 208 a, 252 a); Edinburgh (pp. 126 a, 179 b); Glasgow (p. 179 a); Ipswich (pp. 142 a, 232 a, 248 b, 254 a); Liverpool (pp. 115 a, 156 a: to Mr. Moses Samuel, St. James’ Street, 194 a, 245 a); Manchester

(pp. 108 a, 111 b, 195 b, 251 b); Newcastle (pp. 142 a, 256 b); Jersey (p. 198 b); Plymouth (pp. 168 a, 215 a, 259 a); Portsea (pp. 118 a, 206 a, 249 b, 250 a); Swansea (pp. 225 a, 244 b); Southampton (p. 178 a). Letters in which the personal motive is predominant are perhaps more illustrating to show a full life-picture of our Rabbi. In this connexion one letter, of which my friend Mr. E. N. Adler said it was 'quite classical', is worth quoting in full. The letter (p. 268 a) is addressed to 'Master Elias', who, I venture to suggest, was the son of Hazan D. Elias of the Great Synagogue, who had to resign his position on account of ill-health in 1829 (Picciotto, *Sketches*, p. 333). The Rabbi writes:

'That you are obstinate and unruly I have long known: but that you would carry these faults to the extent you do, I did not expect. Recollect yourself and reflect on your situation. Your only hope of ever becoming a useful member of society rests on your behaving properly during your apprenticeship and learning your trade as you ought. Do this and I will still be your friend as I have been: but if you will be disobedient and persist in your ill conduct, I must decline assisting you or doing any more for you. You know what trouble and anxiety I have had on your account: and now I devote money and time for your welfare I have a right to expect that you should prove yourself worthy of my kindness, which you can only do by proper behaviour to your Master. If you quit him the money paid for you is lost, and I shall certainly not do any thing whatever for you. I therefore again repeat, reflect on your situation; your welfare or ruin depends upon your own conduct. Be wise and show those who have befriended you for your father's sake that their kind-

ness has not been wasted on you. If you do not bestow on my advice you will repent it when it is too late. I am your well-wisher as you behave.'

It is like the words of a father to his son that we hear spoken when we read these lines. Amongst all his activities, his infirmity, and in the midst of his continuous study and arduous communal duties, the Rabbi finds time to write a letter like this to a young boy whom he befriends. And this was not the only boy whom he took under his care. On p. 206 a of the MS. we find the copy of a letter to Messrs. B. and W. Levy at Portsea, dated Feb. 9, A. M. 5597, written on behalf of a young boy named Elkin Gollin, who was to be placed under the care of Messrs. Levy. The Rabbi would have liked the youngest brother of the boy to go to Portsea instead, but 'Mrs. Gollin not being willing to send her youngest son . . . in answer to yours of the 24th ult. concerning Elkin Gollin I beg to say that Mrs. Gollin is agreeable to send him to your care and I trust that under your protection he will do as well. You are no doubt aware of his being much younger than his brother Elias, and I hope therefore that your fostering kindness may be extended watchfully over him, were it possible I should be desirous of having a little conversation with you, whereby you might explain many points to me. . . .' The rest of the letter deals with the question whether a Jew having a non-Jew as partner may allow the business to be open on the Sabbath day, and the Rabbi replies in the affirmative with the reservation that the contract between the partners must clearly state that the profits made on the Sabbath day belong solely and exclusively to the non-Jewish partner.

Another document (p. 184 b) dated June 6, 5596 (1836)

reveals the Rabbi as peacemaker between father and son. 'I should have replied to your letter earlier but waited in hopes being enabled to affect a reconciliation between yourself and your family. . . . I have and am yet willing to do all in my power to make Peace, in the mean time you must not forget that it is your duty to open the road and to strive (strain?) every nerve to bring about the required object you are anxious to obtain.' The letter is addressed to the son, and I do not think it is a coincidence that the names of persons are omitted in the copies of private letters. He was so anxious to guard the secrets of others that he would not even entrust to his private copy-book the names of the people concerned. The letter of the Rabbi had the result hoped for, if, as we may assume, the letter following on the next page (185 a), dated June 15, 5596, refers to the same people. This letter is addressed to a brother of some one who had had a dispute with his parents. 'I am happy to find that my letter has produced the desired effect, indeed nothing affords me more pleasure than to promote peace and goodwill among my flock and much more between Father and Son and I hope that this will, at all events have the happy effect of teaching people to be more cautious before they take an oath, which I am inclined to think too frequently occurs from their acting from the impulse and passion, and not attaching that importance to the sacred name which as human beings they ought to do and next to this in the words of the divine Psalmist: "How beautiful and pleasant for Brethren to dwell together in harmony". I can assure you that my pleasure will not be a little increased by you and your Brother entering the compact and hence forward feeling towards each other as Brothers and men ought to do.'

A similar letter follows, very likely relating to the same people, bearing no date and no names; of this I shall only note the postscript: 'N.B. This letter will be handed you by Mr. Cohen to whom I have instructed to tell you that Immediately after the Post is in you will call on your Parents and ask their forgiveness and also write to your Brother and thank him for his interference. I have written to them on that head and trust that after all unfriendly feelings betwixt the families will be done away with. Should your parents not be at Portsmouth you will immediately on receiving this write to them and also to your Brother thanking him for his interference.' The beginning of the letter reveals the cause of the father's anger. 'I this day received a letter from your Brother of Southampton by which I was more than happy to find that your respected father is likely to be reconciled to the Marriage which you are about to celebrate, I hope to your happiness and prosperity, having done all my efforts to produce this desired end, I feel it now my duty to call on you religiously to perform your part, and as we hope to be forgiven our sins on our חופה day, so we must do our part to merit it. . . .' I have reproduced the last sentence for the purpose of preserving this old and beautiful Jewish tradition which I think is almost forgotten. To enable the young couple to enter the sacred state of matrimonial life in perfect purity of heart and purpose God forgives them all their sins on the wedding day. That is the reason why both bride and bridegroom fast on the wedding day till after the ceremony, an introductory part of which is that both say the afternoon prayer for the eve of Atonement day, with the full confessional prayers.

Among the professional Rabbinical letters we find

several addressed to R. Akiba Eger of Posen, to whom he sent money for distribution to relatives of London Jews living in Poland, to R. Efraim Zalman Margolies of Brod, to the Rabbi of Lemberg whom he calls 'cousin' and to the Rabbi of Paris (p. 250). Many of these letters refer to the divorce of his daughter Fegele, of which we shall hear later. He had correspondence with the Rabbi of Bordeaux, David Marks about the supply of Kasher wine and brandy (pp. 119-20) asking him to supervise the expedition of such wine by a wine merchant called Mr. Isaacson of Bordeaux. Page 269 has a note: הרב דק"ק מארזעליא מיכאל אליעזר הכהן ממעין.

Events in the commercial world were also taken note of. On p. 228 a we read: 'Copy of the Cornwall Royal Gazette: The Queen has been graciously pleased, by warrant from the Lord Chamberlain to appoint Mr. H. Harris, No. 8 Leman St. to be her Majesty's Jeweller in ordinary at Truro.' Copy of a notice by the 'Wherry Mining Company, Mounts Bay, Penzance, Cornwall', informing shareholders that 'the third call of 30s. per share is now made', dated Nov. 27, 1837, discloses that the Rabbi must have had some interest in these shares.

A great deal of trouble must have caused him the letters received from Poland and the money sent through him for distribution in Poland. Apart from Rabbi Akiba Eger, his son-in-law R. Samuel Zelliker, husband of his daughter Golde, and his father Nahum Zelliker received remittances from our Rabbi for distribution in Poland. On one occasion the Rabbi nearly lost £104 in these transactions for the benefit of others (p. 11 b).

While their Rabbi was thus engaged working constantly in order to strengthen and preserve Jewish life and Jewish

tradition his congregation developed on what we call nowadays 'modern lines'. Already as early as 1821 a petition for the shortening of the Misheberach, signed by several members of the Synagogue, was submitted to the managing committee. The petitioners were anxious to improve the decorum of the Synagogue. They call the institution of Misheberach 'a system of finance for which the most solemn prayers are hurried over and which is inconsistent with decorum and public order'. This was a sign of the times, a beginning of the modernization of Anglo-Jewry which ultimately ended in the establishment—in 1841—of the Reform Synagogue. Although most of the founders of the West London Synagogue were members of the Sephardi congregation (three-fourths), the secession was more keenly felt by the Ashkenazi community. R. Solomon Hirschel issued a 'caution' on Sept. 9, 1841, stating that 'persons calling themselves British Jews publicly and in their published book of prayers reject the Oral Law', and further that 'any person or persons declaring that he, or they, reject and do not believe in the authority of the Oral Law cannot be permitted to have any communion with us Israelites in any religious rite or sacred act.' Picciotto tells us on 'unimpeachable authority that the Rev. S. Hirschel, as well as the Rev. D. Meldola, signed the above paper with the greatest reluctance, knowing that it would cause much exasperation', &c., and 'even after the Rev. S. Hirschel had been induced to affix his signature to the document, he wished to recall it. The caution was not promulgated for some time'. On Saturday, Jan. 22, 1842, it was read publicly in the principal Synagogues (*Sketches*, p. 380). Picciotto apparently knew only of the first caution, dated 24 Elul, 5602 (1841), and

issued soon after that date. The caution read on Jan. 22 was a second one, dated 9 Heshvan, 5602 (Oct. 24, 1841).¹³³ The Herem was read in all the Synagogues, except—which is worth noting—in the Western Synagogue, Haymarket, where the wardens refused to have it read. The Reform Synagogue was nevertheless established, and the Herem was afterwards confirmed again by the late Dr. N. M. Adler in 1846.

The stand taken by R. Solomon in connexion with this secession from the orthodox Synagogue was about the only part he took in the public life of the London community. His whole life was devoted to the study of the Torah and the exercise of the holy Law. From early morning till late at night, often till long after midnight, he was bending over the large folios of the Talmud. Of a keen intellect, he was more a receptive than a productive scholar, and too much absorbed in his studies to find time for writing works. No complete work of his remained after him, the products of his studies were only notes on the margins of the books he read, of which so far, nothing has been published. He was rather tall and of commanding appearance in his long robe and broad hat, but was rarely seen except on his way to and from Synagogue. He lived an ascetic life, and it is said that for years he did not eat meat from Sabbath to Sabbath, and fasted every Monday and Thursday throughout the year.¹³⁴

In 1825 Salom J. Cohen published the book *Elements of Faith* in Hebrew, with an English translation, by Joshua Van Oven. The publication was approved of by

¹³³ See W. Ayerst, *The Jews of the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1848, pp. 311 ff.

¹³⁴ *Voice of Jacob*, II, p. 59.

Rabbi Solomon Hirschel and Haham Raphael Meldola. 'It is necessary', writes R. Sol. Hirschel in his Hebrew approbation (dated 1 Kislev, 5575 = 1814), 'to make the Jewish youth acquainted with the elements of our faith, especially in this country. I have examined the book carefully and much approve of it'. This book and Rabbi Solomon Hirschel for recommending it were attacked by a man named Yomtof Bennet in a pamphlet entitled טנא ביקורים = A basket of Criticism (London, 1827).¹³⁵ Yomtof Baneth, or as he called himself in English, Salomon Bennett, was a native of Polotzk in White Russia, and after having been to Riga, Copenhagen, Berlin, and Paris, came to London in 1799. He claimed to possess a patent as Royal Academician of the Berlin Academy in his profession as engraver. He had acquired some Hebrew knowledge in his youth, but was not an observant Jew. 'As orthodoxy was not a favourite theme of mine', he says of himself, 'particularly as a foreigner and a single man, who cannot abide by all the strictness of ceremonial laws, I was then declared a heretic'.¹³⁶ He found friends among the 'English Gentlemen' who were divested of religious and national prejudices, but still he took a lively interest in Jewish communal affairs, apparently to a greater degree than was agreeable to the community itself. He says that Rabbi Solomon Hirschel carried hatred against him in his bosom

¹³⁵ Another controversial pamphlet appeared in 1808 under the title 'The Axe laid to the Root', or 'Ignorance and superstition evident in the character of the Rev. S. Hirschell, High Priest of the Jews in England, in several letters to him on occasion of his having ordered the trees to be felled in the old burial-ground at Mile End Road.' The author was Levi Alexander (*Bibl. Angl. Iudaica*, p. 112).

¹³⁶ See *Present Reign*, &c., p. 4. I am indebted to Rev. M. Rosenbaum for calling my attention to this rather rare pamphlet.

since his stay in Berlin on account of some dissension between Bennett and his father, Rabbi of that metropolis. R. Hirschel, he complains, caused him 'losses of money of above one hundred pounds and imprisonments on account of his portrait'. I have not been able to discover what portrait this refers to. In the pamphlet 'Tene Bikkurim', the English title of which is 'A Collection of Rabbinical Discussions and Criticisms', Bennett accuses the Rabbi of having given his approbation to a book which did not contain the 'elements of faith', but in many instances 'elements of unbelief' (p. 16). In answer to this pamphlet Mayer Cohen Rintel published a booklet called מנחת קנאות (London, 1817, printed by Jechiel Hanau, Bassist of the Great Synagogue), in which he vindicates the writer of the 'Elements of Faith' and the Rabbi. It is quite possible that the whole defence was prepared by Rabbi Solomon, Rintel being a Shoḥet and under his jurisdiction. At least Bennett says so in the reply which he published under the title 'The Present Reign of the Synagogue of Dukes Place displayed'. Rintel, in his Minḥat Kenaot, speaks of the Rabbi in very respectful terms: 'I know the mind of our revered Rabbi well', he says, 'he is a Zaddik who follows in the footsteps of his famous forefathers. He is a man (גִּיּוֹשָׁא הַמְּבֹרָךְ) without pride, not being pleased with praises, but he also does not grieve when he is blamed, and does not mind being criticized. I cannot, however, stand by and see our revered and esteemed leader's honour attacked.'

Bennett's account of R. Solomon is naturally quite different, but his charges are, after all, not so very serious, the principal one being that he cannot speak English, and that he had not yet published any literary work. His

picture of London Jewry, however, may be of some interest.

When he arrived there, he tells us, he found the doors of Jewish houses barred against him in spite of recommendations from friends on the Continent. 'It is a theme in their religious sentiments, if a Jew be not orthodox in the extreme they proclaim him to be an infidel, on the other hand, a man may commit all depredations and immoralities, if he contributed to and attended the Synagogue, he is then, they say, "a good Idde Kiend". Would I have been qualified to be a good companion, to associate in their convivialities, to give an Italian, a French or German song, would I possess *gallant politeness*, undoubtedly I might obtain their friendship, but alas! I was never educated to such fineries'. The causes of these views he explains by a further statement, that his brethren 'entertained an inherent hatred against him', and on which score he had never met with any cordiality from them. That 'proud Pontiff, R. Solomon Hirschell, even formed prosecutions and plans with those who cringe under his government to obstruct all intercourse among my nation', and all this on account of the small work entitled 'Tene Biḳḳurim'. He (Solomon Hirschel) became enraged like a tiger, and having been unsuccessful among the Chief Rabbis with respect to an anathema, he had that poultry-slayer Mayer Cohen, a member of the Petticoat Lane gentry, to compose the book *מנחת קנאות* = 'Avenge Offer'. The anathema was refused by the Rabbis, the Haham Raphael Meldola, and by R. Zalman Bahur and Wolf Lissa of the German Jewish Synagogue. 'One wretched hireling *Mr. Muday* of the Portuguese Synagogue was employed to ruminate the library of the Medrash', and from this and 'the extensive closets

of a Rabbinical library, which is only in the possession of R. Solomon Hirschel (if not in his head) was compiled the vindication entitled "Avenge Offer".¹³⁷ For the last 15 years of Rabbi Solomon's reign he never made any display of learning, but rather an exhibition of rabbinical books, constitutes his Rabbiship.¹³⁸ He presented an inventory of his Rabbinical library with no other views than to dazzle the sight of his illiterate adherents, as if possessing an extensive stock of learning exclusively of his council to consult on every trivial law, namely, R. Zalman Bahur, R. Wolf Lissa, Z. Mousse Croutchick, Muday, &c. It is Mr. Witherby (cp. Picciotto, p. 284 ff.; Wolf-Jacobs: *Bibl. Anglo-Jud.* nos. 407, 411, 415, pp. 71, 72), Doc. Van Oven, Mr. Joseph, the poet of Dukes' Place, Mayer Cohen the poultryman, who are Solomon Hirschel's Hebrew and English writers and the active part of his goverment.' He asks the Rabbi: Why is he so scrutinous of the supposed conduct of one individual, and yet so indifferent to the bulk of his Synagogue, the followers of his standard? seeing that the Royal Exchange, the Stock Exchange, and the Coffee-houses adjoining are all filled with Jew-merchants transacting business on the *Sabbaths* and *holy days quite public*. The Rabbi is also aware that the most part of the Jew-merchants transact business in their *counting and ware-houses* on the Sabbath days without exception; that Jewish shop-keepers, many of them, keep their shops open on the Sabbath day. 'I have very often seen myself', he says, 'Jewish picture dealers of pretended piety, furniture and cloth-sellers, attend public sales on the Sabbath day, all without blushing before the Christian community . . . and yet our pious grand Rabbi never rebukes the generality or any individuals

¹³⁷ See Bennet's *Present Reign*, pp. 12-14.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

for doing so. And why? We have sufficient reason to conjecture, because it would not answer so well his purpose, or because his followers would look upon him with a frown.’¹³⁹ Better still than these outbursts are his statements in the Appendix from which I cannot refrain from quoting a few sentences. ‘People at large run away with a notion, *a man of high station in life*, when speaking of a modern Jewish Rabbi, whom they vulgarly call “the High Priest”. . . . In my country, viz. White Russia, and Poland in general, this title of “grand Rabbi” is quite a legend with the Israelitish public, and I do not hesitate to assert that taking on an average, *one out of two* are men of letters sufficiently qualified to direct themselves and their brethren so as to live according to the ritual laws of Israel. All the towns of the mentioned countries have chosen their Rabbis and teachers out of their own Israelitish inhabitants. . . . But different is the case in this country, scarce *one out of a hundred* of the native Jews who, though they understand a smattering of the Hebrew language, yet understand not the Hebrew rites, and their liturgy in general is quite out of the question. The Rabbies, &c., functions all must be *far fetched*, viz. from foreign countries. Nor is it necessary for a Rabbi in this country to be overstocked with difficult learning, as every dispute, even between brother and brother, comes before the Magistrate and Law courts. With vehemence I exclaim Alas! That the whole Hebrew literature is at stake with my people

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56. Sol. Bennet published also the following works: *Constancy of Israel*, 1812; *A Discourse on Sacrifices*, 1815; דְּרוֹשׁ תּוֹרָנִי, *A Theological and Critical Treatise on the Primogeniture and Integrity of the Holy Language*, 1835; *The Temple of Ezekiel* with engravings by S. B. 1824. About him cp. Mathias Levy in *Jewish Chronicle*, July 31, 1903.

in this kingdom (p. 64). A Rabbi in this country is introduced rather by favour than by merit, and good recommendations of merchants is quite enough for his importation. Adding to this, they who instal the Rabbi, are, unfortunately, not the judges of learning and merit, and those who are the connoisseurs of that article have not any authority or vote to speak for or against that, which was decreed by the rich people.' All this is applied to R. Solomon Hirschel. 'Now for the happy year 1802! London stood in want of the article Rabbi; accordingly some of the Jewish merchants, the friends of the Rabbi at Berlin, recommended his son, the Rabbi of Prentzlow, to the Jewish merchants in London. Among the eminent literati were such as Abraham, Benjamin, and Asher Goldschmids; Amshell and Lizer Kysers; Samuel Joseph, &c. Having been proclaimed by these authorities Pontiff of Duke's Place, a stop must have been put to any inquiry whatsoever and whosoever.'

Solomon Bennet's attacks did the Rabbi very little harm. His charges were all clearly inspired by personal motives, and it mattered little whether Bennet considered him a great scholar or not. I have quoted the foregoing statements of Bennet in order to preserve the names mentioned therein, some of them well-sounding to this day in Anglo-Jewry, and in order to depict the state of affairs in the community as they appeared to him; part, at least, of what he says, must have been in accordance with the facts.

R. Solomon Hirschel's mode of life was very simple and modest, and he was able to save £14,000, which is the amount of his estate left on his death. About two years before he died, he accidentally fell and broke his thigh,

and never quite recovered from the shock. Two months before his death he fell again while walking in his room and broke his collar-bone. The effect of this fall caused his end on Monday the 27th of Heshvan, 5603 = Oct. 31, 1842, in his eighty-first year.

His wife Rebecca Koenigsberg had predeceased him by ten years. She died Wednesday, 6th of Tammuz, 1832, just while his son Saul, who had settled in Sandomishel province of Posen, was in London on a visit to his parents. Saul fell ill during the week of mourning, and died shortly afterwards in London at the age of thirty-three. He was one of the Rabbi's youngest children. Of his wife the Rabbi always speaks with great respect and affection, and his married life seems to have been a very happy one. On one occasion he writes to his son David Tevele, who was his eldest and most troublesome son, that he would not have answered his letter had not his mother said a good word in his favour (MS. A. 4160, p. 256). He had four sons and four daughters. The sons were David Tevele, Saul, Ephraim, and Zevi Hirsch. The daughters were Golde, Shendel, Fegele, and another who apparently remained unmarried and died some twenty years ago at Ramsgate. David Tevele married the daughter of Isaac, son of Jonah Reich of Gumbinnen. A daughter of his marries in 1827, and his father sends him 500 florins towards her dowry and 100 florins for wedding expenses. David does not seem to have been reliable in business, and his father sends the money to his son-in-law, Samuel Zeliker, in Warsaw with the order not to hand it over until the wedding-day (MS. A. 4160, pp. 25b-26a). The son belittled this contribution from his father, and he writes himself a letter and, in addition, induces his sister Shendel, of Rava, to plead on his behalf.

The father's answer has some reference to his own position in London: . . . וכבר כתבתי שלא תטו און לדברי הבל הבלים של : העולם בכלל אשר פיהם שוא ידברו, והנה המעט הרכוש בכלי כסף וספרים, לא אמנע מי יתן והיתה ביכולתי לשבת על מי מנוחות ויהי' די סיפוקי מהרכוש אשר לי, ולהשליך מעלי עול הרבנות אשר כמעט נלאתי נשוא עוד מרוב העבודה והטרדות מלבד חולשת מזגי ל"ע בעתים הללים [הללו] נוסף על מורת רוח, מהפריצות והעזות אשר עלתה בימינו בע"ו . . . I have already written you not to listen to the general talk of the world, they speak falsity. See the little possessions I have in silver and books, I do not deny having them, but I wish I could afford to sit quietly [live a retired life] and should have enough to live on from my income, to throw off the yoke of the Rabbinate from my shoulders, which I can hardly bear any longer on account of the heavy work and amount of trouble, apart from my weak state of health and the aggravation I have on account of the religious laxity and shamelessness which has become frequent in our days on account of our sins.' Is it not as if we heard the Rabbi's father speak seventy years previously? (MS. 4160, p. 26 a ; cp. *JQR.*, N. S., vol. IX, pp. 124 ff.). On another occasion the Rabbi writes with reference to his fame as a rich man (p. 13 b). 'I am not a Rothschild perhaps not a tenth part of the tenth of his money do I possess, not in Pounds but not even in Thaler.' David Tevele afterwards settled in Jerusalem. When he left for the Holy Land the father gave him recommendations to Messrs. Hilbe Heugh & Co. of Beirut, and sent him letters through the British Consul in Alexandria and Jerusalem. The addresses were noted in MS. A. 4160, p. 269 a, as follows: 'Mr. D. Hirschell care W^m Young Esq^r H. M. Vice Consul Jerusalem care of H. B. M^s Consul Alexandria

via Marseilles.' The same address is repeated without the words referring to Alexandria.

Saul, the second son, had lived in Sandomishel, province of Posen, and died in London in 1827.

The third son called himself Ephraim London, and lived in Tysmeniça in Galicia.

The youngest son was Zevi Hirsch. For some time he was a wine-merchant in Cracow, and supplied wine to his father in London (MS. A. 4160, p. 13a); afterwards he settled, like his eldest brother, in Jerusalem (Zevi Laz., p. 177).

The eldest daughter, Golde, was married to Samuel, son of Nahum Zelliker in Warsaw, and seems to have been in good circumstances. They were, as mentioned, the agents of their father for distributing money from London Jews to relatives in Poland. On one occasion the Rabbi received a complaint from the senders that too much commission was deducted in Warsaw for a transmittance, and instead of 108 thaler 12 gr. only 102 thaler 20 gr. were received. The Rabbi warns his children not to do it in future, and appends some very sound morals as regards behaviour in business. They should not try to make too much out of one transaction, and in the case of transmittance of money from him, which mostly is done in the interest of poor people, they should not charge anything except the actual commission charged to them. 'Who knows how many have sinned in such matters, it is better to be economical and to lead a simple life, always to spend less than one's earnings so as to be able to save little by little. If our sages say that even the most liberal man should not give more than a fifth of his possessions for charity, how much less justified is anybody to spend more than

that for outward appearances. I was myself also a young man once and had money, but I would never do a thing like this. It is true I lost money, (otherwise) I never had the idea to become a Rav, indeed I intended to become a wine-merchant at a time when I had offers of several Rabbinate, but I wanted to live on my own earnings, although I could at the time already stand up and hold my own among Hebrew scholars, and also among people of ייחוס (ancient families) we need not be ashamed, but God said it should be (and so I had to become a Rabbi). My opinion has not changed even now, and I still hope he will enable me to live a retired life, so that I can serve Him for the rest of my days with all my soul and all I have.' This letter was written on the 27th of Tebet, 5587 (1827). There are several other letters written to this son-in-law and daughter dealing with remittances of moneys to Poland (pp. 5 b, 14 b, 18 b, 21 b, 22 a, 27 b-31 a).

The second daughter was Shendel, married to R. Michael Rawer (of Rawa). This son-in-law stood not in great favour with our Rabbi. On one occasion he writes he would send her some money to go to a watering-place for the benefit of her health, fl. 100, and if that is not enough her husband and his father should also give her something towards the expenses.

The third daughter Fegele, or Feige, caused him anxiety and trouble for many years. In 1827 she married in Poland, at the same time as her niece, the daughter of her brother David Tevele (p. 13 b). The name of her husband is not mentioned, but we know that he was a grandson of Rabbi Akiba Eger of Posen, being the son of R. Solomon Eger in Warsaw,^{139 a} with whom R. Solomon Hirschel stood in frequent correspondence (MS. A. 4160,

^{139 a} Cp. L. Lewin, *Gesch. d. Jud. in Lissa*, p. 246.

pp. 4 b, 10 a, 11 b, 12 a). In 1828 (23 Shevat) her father sends her an answer to a letter which she had written to him on the back of a business letter to some one in the provinces. He mentions in the letter the towns of Hamburg and Herzburg (Hirschberg in Posen), but we cannot gather from the same where she lived. The father would like to know whether she could send him from her place Hungarian wine, as he thinks that his son Hirsch of Cracow takes advantage of him (*ibid.*, p. 34 a). In 1836 we hear that her husband had become insane. The Beth Din of Brod (Brody in Galicia) was ready to arrange her divorce, as it is stated he was sometimes quite sane, but they required to be well paid for it, as they held the Rabbi of London to be a very rich man. Rabbi Solomon Hirschel writes to the Rabbi of Lemberg (no name is mentioned) on the 22nd of Elul, 5596, thanking him for the hospitality he granted to his daughter, and asks him to further the matter, but in a reasonable way, as he was not a rich man, and did not feel justified to sacrifice all he had for one child, while his other children were also in need of help from him (*ibid.*, p. 123). The divorce was not granted easily; a year later, on 1st of Ijjar, 5597, the father has still to plead the cause of his daughter with the Rabbi of Posen (p. 212 b), and the Rabbi of Amsterdam, R. Saul (p. 212 a). One Mr. Eiger married a granddaughter of R. Solomon, and was the chief mourner at the funeral.¹⁴⁰ It is said that the Rabbi, having been afraid that his children would not remain religious in England, sent them abroad when quite young so as to have them brought up in a religious atmosphere. This explains why none of his descendants settled in this country.

¹⁴⁰ *Voice of Jacob*, II, p. 58.

The funeral took place on Wednesday, Nov. 2, 1842 (28 Tebeth, 5563) with great solemnity. All the shops, even most of the non-Jewish ones, were closed on the route of the funeral, and his remains were interred in the burial-ground at Mile End. In his will he had forbidden all funeral pomp, and had expressed the wish that no funeral oration should be delivered. The Service was read by the Hazan, Mr. Asher. The 'Order of Service for the Funeral of the lamented Chief Rabbi Rev. Solomon Herschel, Wednesday, 29th of Cheshvan A.M. 5603', consists of fifteen pages 8°, and has the following Hebrew title: פסוקים ומזמורים שיאמרו ביום קבורת אדוני"מור הה"ג מו"ה שלמה נ"ע כ"ט מרחשון תר"ג (cf. Zedner, p. 477. A copy of this Order of Service is also in the possession of E. N. Adler). The Rev. Henry Hawkes, B.A., F.L.S., however, a Christian clergyman, held a funeral sermon at Portsmouth on the occasion of the Rabbi's death, which was afterwards published under the title 'Position of the Jews' (Green, Newgate St., 1s.). His text was, 'Know ye not that a great man has fallen this day in Israel?' (2 Sam. 3. 38). 'Who shall say how often his heart bled for the sufferings of his people? And will you not comfort those that mourn him?' are the words of this worthy divine. His sermon was a plea for the admission of the Jews to all rights of English citizenship.

The estate of R. Solomon Herschel was valued, as mentioned, at about £14,000. The effects were sold in February, 1843, by an auctioneer named Robin, and comprised many an interesting article, such as the already mentioned silver cup with the medal of Vespasianus, presented to R. Solomon's father by Mendelssohn. For the benefit of those to whom the 'Voice of Jacob' is not

easily accessible, I mention the following. Two curious spice-boxes, used at the close of the Sabbath, fetched £20. Two Hannuccah lamps fetched 10s. 6d. and 12s. per ounce. The trowel, used for laying the foundation-stone of the New Synagogue, was bought for that congregation. Some of the curious walking canes 'elegantly mounted with gold fetched high prices, one as much as £7 10s.' The total proceeds reached the sum of £1,400. The library was not included in the sale, but was afterwards purchased with money bequeathed by Mr. Solomon Arnold for the Beth-Hamidrash and the 148 MSS. were later catalogued by Dr. Neubauer in 1866.¹⁴¹

In memory of the defunct Rabbi a medal was struck during the following year (1843). One side of this medal bears the facsimile of the head and bust of R. Solomon, while the reverse gives the record of his age, date of death, and term of office. It was published by H. Hyams, medallist of Cornhill, who also produced a bronze bust a few inches high.

With R. Solomon Herschel passed away the last of the old Rabbinical school. After his death the community was of opinion that it required as Chief Rabbi 'a man who not only possessed deep Jewish learning and was versed in the depths of Talmud and Halakah, but who was, at the same time, a man of classical and general attainments, of ability to understand and discretion to use the times', and will be able to organize the elements under him.¹⁴² The choice of the community fell, after nearly two years of deliberations, on the late Dr. N. M. Adler, Chief Rabbi of Hanover.

¹⁴¹ Cf. above, p. 51. See preface to the Catalogue.

¹⁴² See *Voice of Jacob*, *ibid.*